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VWBUS T4&5+

NEXT ISSUE 93 ON SALE WEDNESDAY, FEB 12TH

As the New Year dawns and Camper Mart is once again just around the corner, my thoughts turn to the warmer and lighter evenings ahead. That and the huge amount of work needed to get my bus up to spec for the coming season. Luckily, I don't have to kip in the bus at Camper Mart, although I know that a few of you hardy souls do. I have a nice warm hotel room booked next door... sorry. We've got a fantastic line up of buses for the indoor displays again this year, although at the time of writing there were still one or two places open. Head over to the Camper Mart website www.campermart.co.uk if you want to enter. It's the same address for the Show & Shine by the way and there are still a few places left there too.

In the magazine this month is a selection of buses designed to perfectly usher in the New Year in style. Let's start with the cover bus. Richard Starbrook's Tartan T5 is splitting opinion here in the editorial office, it is definitely one of a kind. Climbing off the fence, I'll say I like it! Our second bus is Jona Turner's T6, already something of a social media star already, known as 'Klaus The Mobile House' it is far less challenging, but no less stylish. Our third feature is Chris Brown's T4, another with a standout feature, this time it's a beautiful bonnet sporting artwork from Kustom Sammy. Next up is Ryan Gooding T5 camper, clean, simple and beautifully executed, definitely a cool 'less is more' type of bus. Feature five is Justin Williams' Chrome Yellow T6, a big bed, a pop-top and a Slidepod out back, are the basic ingredients of this stunning bus. Our final feature is John Adamcik's ex-Polish ambulance, petrol powered Syncro, it's now a hi-top Swamper, being used as a long-term home for John and his wife, Veronika, to tour Europe in, in some style. Now that dear reader is an awesome and varied line up to start off 2020 in style. Don't forget you still have time to vote for Bus Of The Year, see page 43 for details.

Happy New Year!

Jimmer

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This month I have mostly been...

Well the New Year is here, and this issue goes or is that went (?) out to subscribers on 2nd January. By the time you read this Camper Mart will be less than a month away. We can't wait for the show, we have some excellent buses for you to see and the list of traders is better than ever. There's still time to enter the show and shine if you're quick! I hope to see you there. Alan

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36 It's A Kind Of Magic
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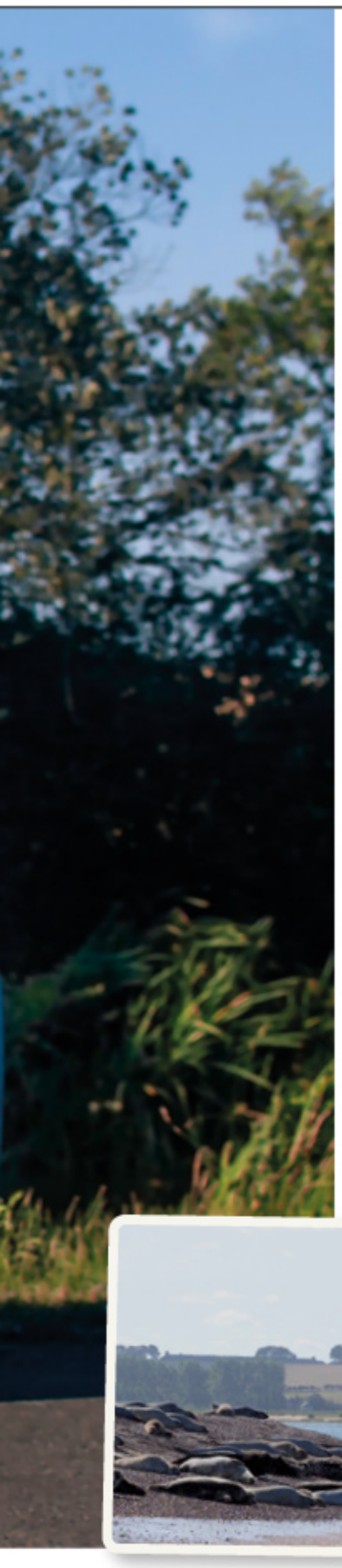

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62 Xtreme Wake Open Day
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66 Dubs At The Castle
Simon again, this time he's in Caldicot for a bit of haunted castle/dub show action

Roundup

The latest T4 and T5 news from around the world

Camper Mart

The Season Starts Here!

This is the first issue of 2020 and unbelievably we're talking about our first show of the year. Camper Mart will once again be held in the Telford International Centre on the first Sunday in February, 2nd February. This indoor feast for the Transporternaut gives you the chance to blow off some winter cobwebs and start the prep for the summer season to come. As last year, there will be a large selection of quality vans inside on display, with everything from Split Screens to T6s, and all points in between represented. Outside there will be a show and shine competition with the prize being awarded on stage later in the day. There will be a whole host of traders present where you will be able to buy anything from a fully converted van through to a key to open one. Then there are the presentations and demos, here's just a few to be going along with: You can learn how to put up an air beam awning with Olpro or clean a turbo with Revive. Both companies will also be sticking around to answer questions. Air-cooled expert, David Eccles, will be discussing early buses on stage with Alan. The bus doctors, Robin Fearn of Busmeister and Darren Bond, along with the Water-Cooled Tech, Ron Evans of Evans Autopoint and BeLow, will be on hand to answer any questions or queries you may have about your bus. Digital artist, Pye Candy, will be demonstrating his skills and VDub Radio will be broadcasting live from the show. Finally, the results of this year's prestigious Bus Of The Year will be announced live on stage. More demos and presentations will be announced later, so keep an eye on Camper Mart's Facebook page or visit www.campermart.co.uk.

Doors open at 9:00am and tickets are currently available in advance at £10 per adult (under 18s go free) from the website.

Run The Ring

2020 Update

After a year off, Run the Ring returns in 2020, with the aim of going bigger and better than ever. Having raised over £66,000 in three years for charities helping young people, this year the chosen beneficiary is PAPYRUS, the UK charity for the prevention of young suicide. Suicide is the biggest killer of young people - male and female - under 35 in the UK. PAPYRUS provide confidential support and advice to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide and to anyone worried about a young person, through their helpline - 0800 068 4141 or www.papyrus-uk.org/hopelineuk/ If you want to know more about Run The Ring then keep an eye on their Facebook page. Registrations for RTR4 will open this Spring.

Van Theft Up

Disturbing New Figures

Van theft across the UK has soared by 45% over the last four years with over 30,000 vehicles stolen since 2015 according to research conducted by Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles. Of the 9,371 van thefts reported in the past twelve months, the Metropolitan Police recorded more than half of that total, with 4,777 commercial vehicles stolen in the area – a rise of 15%. Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles is advising van owners to ensure their vehicles are fitted with the latest anti-theft devices as well as remembering to remove expensive tools and equipment from vehicles at night.

T17 Table

End Of The Year Stats

If T17 is unfamiliar to you, it is a group of like-minded nutters, who race their vans down the strip, aiming to get a sub seventeen second run, hence the name. Last year was a busy year for T17, with a fair bit of movement in the lower reaches of the table and some new names on the list. Even if the top places remain unchanged there are signs of more change in the coming year. VW Bus have been involved with the club from the start and the table topper always gets a year's free subscription to the magazine. For more information seek them out on Facebook or visit their website at www.t17.club

1	Andi Riley	*T5 SWB Petrol with Audi Quattro running gear*	York	**12.23**
2	Steve Mattravers	*T3 Petrol with 1.8T engine and a Garrett GT28 Turbo*	York	**14.7920**
3	Paul Walklate	*T5 SWB Diesel Running NOS and racing slicks WRDC member*	Santa Pod	**14.82**
4	Shawn Lewis	*T5 SWB Diesel with mods too numerous to mention*	*Santa Pod*	**15.1903**
5	Mark Stephenson	*T4 SWB Petrol with 1.8t engine, running with a stripped interior*	Santa Pod	**15.2245**
6	Martin Turner	*T5 SWB Diesel with a hybrid turbo and water/meth injection*	Santa Pod	**15.2758**
7	Gavin Black	*T6 LWB Petrol running with light mods*	Enniskillen	**15.49**
8	Ben Norman	*T4 Doka Petrol with KKK24 turbo and Wossner internals*	Spitfire	**15.51**
9	Adrian Coomber	*T4 SWB Petrol running 18t engine and mods*	Santa Pod	**15.8139**
10	James Hardacre	*T4 SWB Diesel with multiple mods too numerous to mention*	Santa Pod	**16.0090**
11	Andrew Munt	*T4 SWB Diesel running with GT2260 Turbo*	Santa Pod	**16.0621**
12	Michael Dunn	*T6 LWB Petrol with multiple mods too numerous to mention*	Santa Pod	**16.0697**
13	Doug Chivers	*T4 LWB Petrol with K03S Turbo*	Santa Pod	**16.6996**

Race Van

Speed Is King

Coming soon to the pages of VW Bus magazine is this T4 belonging to Tom Dean from Speedingtube. It has a 1.8T engine with a six-speed gearbox conversion aiming for 550bhp + 100 shot of nitrous! You won't be surprised to learn that it has undergone extensive R&D. Tom aims to take the T4 all over the country this year and is always happy to take people out for a spin, so don't be afraid to say 'Hello' when you see him. Andrew Thompson will be meeting up with him early this year for the first exclusive magazine feature on this crazy bus. For more information visit Tom's social media channels @speedingtube.

ShowGuide

01 JANUARY
National Behaviour Apology Day
Mostly Local
www.sorryigotdrunk.org

02 FEBRUARY
Camper Mart
The International Centre, Telford
www.campermart.co.uk

15 – 16 FEBRUARY
DubFreeze
Stafford County Showground
www.dubfreeze.co.uk

08 MARCH
Ultimate Dubs
The International Centre, Telford
www.ultimate-dubs.co.uk

09 -13 APRIL
CamperFest
Roodee Racecourse, Chester
www.camperfest.co.uk

10 – 13 APRIL
Wonderland 2 - The Dubbers of OZ
Chillington Hall, Wolverhampton
www.dubscollective.com

17 – 19 APRIL
Vee Dub Family
5th Birthday Big Camp Out
Unity Farm, Brean
www.veedubfamily.org

19 APRIL
Elsecar At The Races
Doncaster Racecourse
www.elsecarattheraces.com

19 APRIL
GTI Spring Festival
Santa Pod Raceway
www.santapod.co.uk

03 MAY
Stanford Hall VW Show
Stanford Hall, Stanford-on-Avon
www.stanfordhallvw.com

07 -10 MAY
Derbyshire Dubs
Wardlow, Buxton
www.derbyshiredubs.co.uk

08 – 10 MAY
VW Campout
Budle Bay, Northumberland
www.vwcampout.uk

For full listings visit
WWW.VWSHOWS.COM
Please check details/ dates with organisers before setting off!
If you know of any amendments or of a show not listed please email:
alan.hayward@vwbusmagazine.com
so that updates can be made for the next issue.

BusKit

VW Bus would like to wish all our readers a wheelie, wheelie Merry Christmas

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In Model Form

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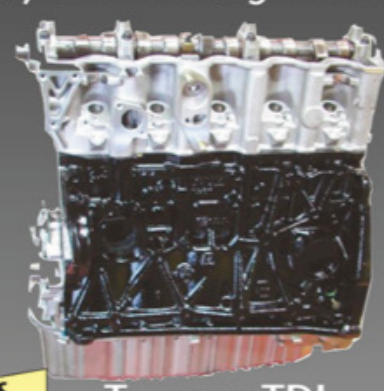

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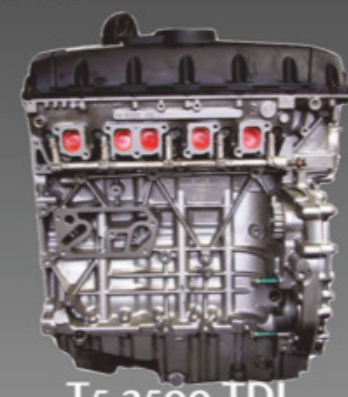

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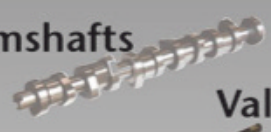

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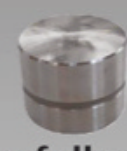
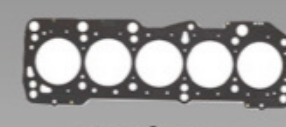


Cam followers



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When you’re a confirmed biker, campers aren’t really under consideration, but life can sometimes intervene and make you change direction

Steve “autoholic” Edwards

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Happily Rossi's treatment was successful, he has been clear of leukaemia for a couple of years now

When biking is in your blood, things can change. Take Richard Starbrook, when he had a motocross accident in 2007 in which he broke his back, he decided to give up two wheels, discretion as they say, is the better part of valour. Once off bikes Richard started to get into cars culminating in the purchase of a 227bhp 2007 Honda Integra Type R, his second of that model. Richard runs a window tinting business that was named after the first Integra he'd owned, Tint R. He's has been tinting glass for twenty years and can apply it to anything from the more regular car windows to those from a conservatory, in fact anything glass that can fit into his workshop can receive the treatment that come in five different shades.

One thing he didn't count on, was when one of his good friends showed up at his work with a new two wheeled purchase, he then proceeded to talk him into having a little go on it. That stirred the old feelings sufficiently for him to amass a collection of some thirteen bikes over a period of time, so much for discretion....

In 2014 his son, Rossi, then aged four, was diagnosed with leukaemia, he started a three-year course of chemotherapy which meant that he could not be taken out of the country on holiday. Richard sold the majority of his bike collection and bought his first motorhome. He bought a Transit that featured a storage area for a couple of mountain bikes at the rear. This was handy, but when it comes to van design there's always a price to pay and in this case, it was the internal space that suffered. Having had caravans over the years, he felt the motorhome would be an upgrade, but instead he found it cumbersome and awkward to drive and as it didn't have the best layout, it had to go. Shortly afterward, the Type R was involved in an accident when someone drove into the back of it, the insurance company

Black was the intended interior colour

decided it was beyond economical repair and paid Richard out. On some of their trips they had spotted T5s about and started to look into buying one of those as an alternative. The search began, but Rossi had asked if they could have a Danish Blue one, as he really liked the colour. Richard wanted a long wheelbase version, with the six-speed automatic gearbox, this meant that options were extremely limited. With choices being very sparse, the decision was taken that compromises needed to be made to the search criteria. All bar one were open to negotiation and the one that thing that couldn't be changed? The choice of colour, of course.

Eventually Richard spotted this 2004, SWB, 1.9 T5 on eBay, it had a reasonably low mileage, but was situated on the south coast in Bournemouth, quite some way from Richard's Nottingham base, but for the right colour, the geography was incidental. The seller was a joiner and was upgrading to a 5.1 and apart from the back being full of sawdust, in every nook and cranny, it was in great condition and so the deal was done, and the van driven home. Being in the Midlands meant that Richard was very close to Kev Simpson's Buspoke world headquarters, so it was an easy choice to get him to install the Skyline elevating roof with an orange canvas along with a custom bed board. His friends at Nottingham Windscreens cut and installed the windows in the sides and tailgate, they also switched the glass that the factory had fitted in the side, for some with opening sections. Richard added his own insulation and really went to town with the sound proofing material, as after he'd gotten into cars, he'd also been interested in-car audio installs too. He also added the ply lining and covered it with some Veltrim, but not the usual shade of grey or black. He'd found a company in Skegness who could supply it in blue which contrasted nicely with the GTI style orange wool material that was being put in. As surprising as it may seem, Richard had always planned on black being the dominant shade for the interior. But he recalled the colour wheel from art class, where orange compliments blue perfectly and so decided to add a little colour into his life instead.

The additional vinyl that has been added to the exterior is the

Bus details

What did the van start as? Panel

Colour? Danish Blue

LWB/SWB SWB

BHP? 140

Wheels type and size? Banded steels 17"

Tyres? 235/55/17

Lowered? -70mm

Why is it special to you? It's special because of all the fun Rossi and I have had and will have in it, he reckons he's having it when he's old enough to drive!

As surprising as it may seem, Richard had always planned on black being the dominant shade for the interior

Richard has been tinting glass for twenty years and can apply it to anything from the more regular car windows to those from a conservatory

official tartan of the internet based, radio station Primordial Radio. It's called Pride of Primordial and was officially listed with The Scottish Register of Tartans in 2018. The radio station was founded at the beginning of 2017 by three members of 'Team Rock' who had been involved with the publication of Metal Hammer and Classic Rock & Prog magazines, they also had an online radio station but were sadly put into administration. A plea was put out for some crowd funding and by July of that year the first milestone had been achieved when over £150,000 had been received from over 850 investors, Richard being one of those. The station officially launched in September 2017, a subscription service, there are no adverts just a positive metal attitude. It plays Rock and Metal music, subscribers not only get access to live broadcasts and a selection of recorded shows, they also get member exclusive podcasts and a host of playlists too. If you fancy a thirty-day free trail then head to the station's website, www.primordialradio.com (Use the code /eg1-sub/?eg1=PR_yv1SPLZZ to get 90 days free access rather than the usual 30.). Richard was given permission from the station to use the pattern on his van, he also included the logo on the bonnet, the vinyl was printed and applied by Sam at Futureprint in Nottingham.

Outside the seventeen-inch T32 steel wheels have been widened by Duchy Banded Wheels, who also powder coated the rims and the Beetle hubcaps that have been added too. The van had a full ABT body kit installed, but after the front splitter became detached and

The additional vinyl that has been added to the exterior is the official tartan of the internet based, radio station Primordial Radio

was run over accidentally, it was replaced with a Sportline item. The bumpers and body kit were painted by Tim at Clements in Alfreton, the headlights were even disassembled to add some highlights there too.

Happily, Rossi's treatment was successful and he has been clear of leukaemia for a couple of years now. He's now big into the online game Fortnite, Richard has had to buy his own Playstation 4 to play along with his son. Rossi always manages to sneak up on his Dad in the game and Richard could never figure out how until he realised that his screen was in his son's line of sight as they are playing in the same room. Richard still has a Yamaha RD350, which he won't be getting rid of, to satisfy his two wheeled desires, but the van has definitely captured his heart and of course the beat is still racing when the stereo is tuned to that metal station.

Richard

And I'd like to thank...

Kev at Buspoke
Tim at Clements
Sam at Futureprint
Duchy Banded Wheels
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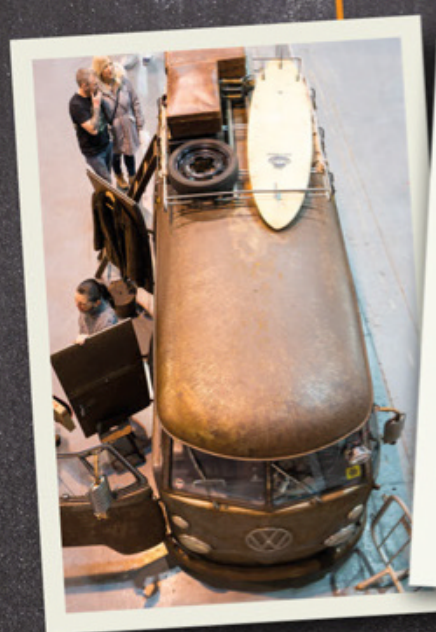

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Endless Summer VW Show

It was touch and go whether the weather would allow this to be another Endless Summer show, or not

Simon Cooke

Endless Sumer – may just be a somewhat risky name for a show that's at the mercy of the UK's weather; so much could possibly go wrong to make the show name the butt of people's jokes.

Happily, in 2019, they were lucky again. So, it was dry and sunny, albeit with a few spots of rain. One of the great things about this location is that it's totally surrounded by trees which block out the wind. Wind which had been in gale force form across much of the country during the surrounding days.

The layout for the show was pretty much what I've come to expect over the years - and I've been to every show since it started; event tent and stage up one end of the field, show & shine and clubs down the middle and all surrounded by traders, of which there were more than I can remember from past years. A large number of traders were working from converted VWs, which is always good to see. South Coast Transporters had taken over the far end of the field for their Wild West-themed stand. They picked up two show & shine awards for Best T4 and Best T5/6.

As usual there was live music - Max Toogood-Wolvey and Natasha Bellinfantie and this year there were even rows of deck chairs for people to enjoy the music from - a nice addition and a great bonus had the grass been wet.

At this show the show & shine entries can enter from wherever they are parked - which makes it a bit difficult if you are trying to check them all out, because they

That means people can just walk into the show while doing their Sunday shopping around Basingstoke

SCT display with the 'Best T4' in red at the back

Best In Show winner

Best In Show Trophy

AT THE SHOW

Dean was parked up with his Splitty and matching tent. The Split is his first ever VW and this was only the second time he's ever been to the show - he's been once before, but on foot as he only lives around the corner. "We have owned this for just over a year and a half and it's our pride and joy, "said Dean. He's got plans for a new interior over the winter.

AT THE SHOW

Chris was notching up his fourth visit to the show. This year he was parked up with his T4 and selling his range of Dubs of Anarchy (no relation to the show of the same name!) T-shirts and Hoodies. “I think the field looks fuller than last year and obviously the weather helps; it’s a great one-day show,” he said. At least I think that’s what he said - it’s hard to understand through his mask.

I only spotted four VWs that I've featured before in VW magazines during my laps around the field

won't all be parked side by side for quick and simple comparisons. Talking of which, I only spotted four VWs that I've featured before in VW magazines during my laps around the field - which to be honest is less than I'd normally expect to see at a show. I don't really know what this means but it is worthy of note. Mind you, two of them walked off with prizes, including the overall show winner!

I've mentioned before that the somewhat unique selling point this show has, is the fact that it's a park bang in the middle of town, rather than a location miles from anywhere, which is the more normal location for a show. That means people can just walk into the show while doing their Sunday shopping around Basingstoke, and people at the show can also pop to the shops if they want to. I've never used this location advantage before this year, but I did pop into town for lunch.

Much as I'd rather have stayed at the show - there was only one burger seller - my staple show meal - (there were other alternatives) and the wait was an average of forty minutes. So, I nipped into town for a Big Mac, ate at a table with WiFi and air-con and was still back on duty in well under the time it would have taken me to get a burger on-site. Now I know the burgers from the top of a VW camper would have been very good because I had one last year, and the year before, but I don't really do queues.

Getting into the show with a vehicle was £5 - or free if you were on foot. It cost an extra £2 to enter show & shine.

Over £3000 was raised from the day's events for local charity Naomi House. Support for the show came from JPL Automotive, TK Detailing, Bear Body Works and The Lab who supplied the limited-edition T Shirts.

New Kids On The Block

Jona and Melissa Turner had never owned a VW before this T6, but they are already lapping Europe in 'Klaus' like seasoned veterans

Simon Cooke

Klaus The Mobile House is a T6 with his own social media pages, he is much more famous that his owners Jona and Melissa Turner from Southampton could ever hope to be. He joined the Turner family at the start of 2018. Prior to owning Klaus, the couple had never owned a VW and had little experience of camping, although they did love long road trips. Before 2018 their only VW camping experience was a weekend in a Splitty, although Jona says that he'd always fancied owning his own camper, 2018 was the time to make it happen. "We knew if we bought one it would need to be reliable enough for more European road trips and it had to have the luxuries we're used too, including cruise control, air con, electric windows etc etc" Jona explained. So that effectively rules out Bays and Splits then.

The original plan was to buy one ready converted and they actually spotted one then liked on Bath VW Campers' website, only to phone up and find a customer had just reserved it. Undeterred they went to view the T5 and liked what they saw and the company that built it. "We really liked them and their work and started some serious discussions about buying one, but at that point I realised that I'd want something with a higher spec to start with, so we moved onto a T6," explained Jona. By selling his Focus ST, he freed up some spare cash for the project. Talking of money their base van cost them £22,000, then it was about £16,000 more for the conversion.

That T6 - or Klaus, as he was later named - came from a VW dealer in Manchester. "We knew that we wanted a white Highline with low miles," said Jona. "This was a standard panel van, under a year old and with only 12,000 miles on the clock." He had it delivered straight to Bath VW Campers. "I met the van there, checked it over, drove around the block, and then handed the keys over," he remembers. They had already agreed on the conversion spec they wanted, this included the scenic pop top, together with some additions which were not actually on the option list. "For instance, we knew we wanted a solid wood work top, so we found one in Ikea and asked them to pop into the shop to buy one and then fit it," said Jona. They also got a wooden floor from a local shop added into the mix. He says his T6 was the first that Bath Campers had ever fitted an extra shelf above the kitchen too

Bus details

What did the van start as? T6 Highline panel

Colour? White

LWB/SWB SWB

BHP? 150

Wheels type and size? 18" AutoKraft

Tyres? 255/45/18

Lowered? Van slam -50 mm front, -40 mm back

Why is this bus special? It's our first camper, so will always be a milestone for us. Whilst there may be things we'll change for our next van, Klaus has given us our first taste of VW life, and we've customised the van to suit us - we're always coming up with little ways to make it better!

We went to Cornwall for a weekend straight after we collected the van and I thought it was amazing and I couldn't wait to go again

and the first for sliding door storage units. Jona fitted the large projector screen himself, the fairy lights, the diesel heater, and also added the very handy magnetic storage rings that are stuck on the Dometic - they used to live on his fridge at home. Jona has also modified the pumping design, so he doesn't need to remove the water bottle to fill it up. "We don't have a toilet or shower and so far, we have always stayed on camp sites, but we will look at installing something, as we'd like to do some wild camping in the future."

At the start of his adventure Klaus was fitted with a rock & roll bed, which was trimmed to match the original single and double seats up the pointy end. Following a trip to Europe, they decided they needed more storage space so swapped to a RIB bed, which was trimmed to match the new front seats; those 1999 Ford Galaxy front seats were a bargain - £40 for the pair and they comes as standard with swivel bases. He removed the arm rests so they can both get into the back of the van without having to go outside. Of course, they have since discovered that their RIB 104 (£1200, second-hand) is not the most comfortable to sleep on so have added a memory topper.

Klaus sits lower to the ground

18" Autokrafts

Jona's projector screen

Ford Galaxy front seats

thanks to Van Slam, this means he's under 2m high, so can claim a cheaper rate on the ferry. That's also why he runs on these 18" rims. "I bought these AutoKraft rims as 20s to start with, but after a long European trip we agreed they made the ride too hard, so I swapped them for the exact same alloys but as 18s - it's a nicer ride now and it also means the speedo is now bang on too!" pointed out Jona. Given a blank cheque he says he'd love to fit air suspension.

Under the bonnet it's exactly the same as when it left the VW factory, Jona had picked the more powerful 150 bhp engine to start with; "We certainly didn't want the 84 or 102 bhp versions," he confirmed. On the outside Jona designed, cut and fitted the graphics himself - as he did on the interior.

Klaus has certainly been racking up the miles since he hit the road looking like this - notching up 20,000 miles in the past year which included trips to France, Germany, Austria and Belgium, not to mention being used a Jona's daily driver. In fact, Klaus was working the first week he was collected from Bath. "I wasn't much of a camper before and I wasn't really sure what was involved, but we went to Cornwall for a weekend straight after we collected the van and I thought it was amazing and I couldn't wait to go again," revealed Melissa. Just as well really as she's lost count of how many, hours, days and nights she's spent with Klaus since.

Down on Van Slams

T6

Jona

And I'd like to thank...

Bath VW Campers for the camper conversion

CSG Trimming for the seat upholstery

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Simon Cooke

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Difficulty rating

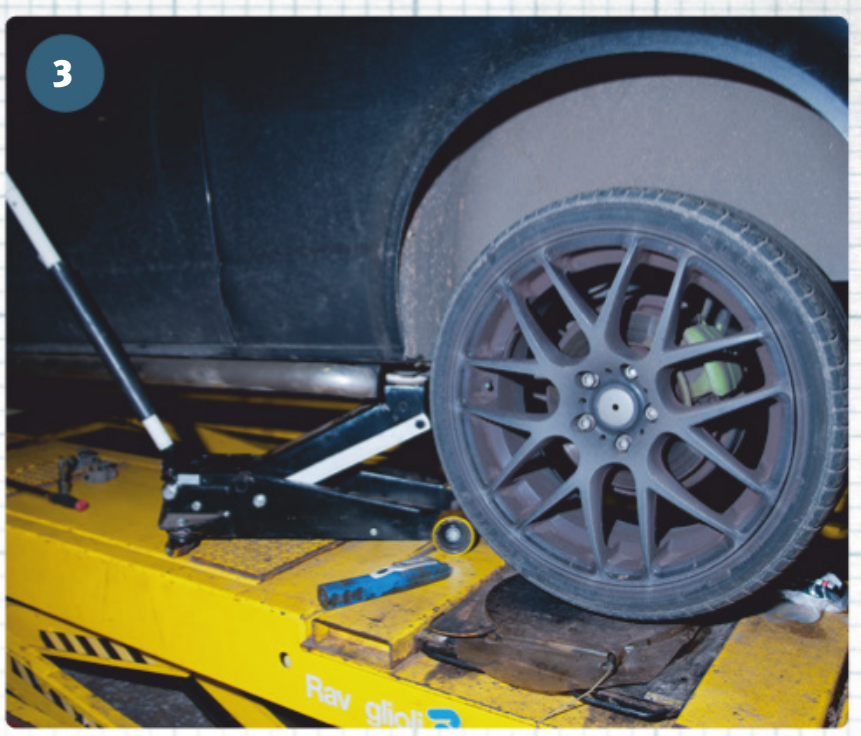
EASY

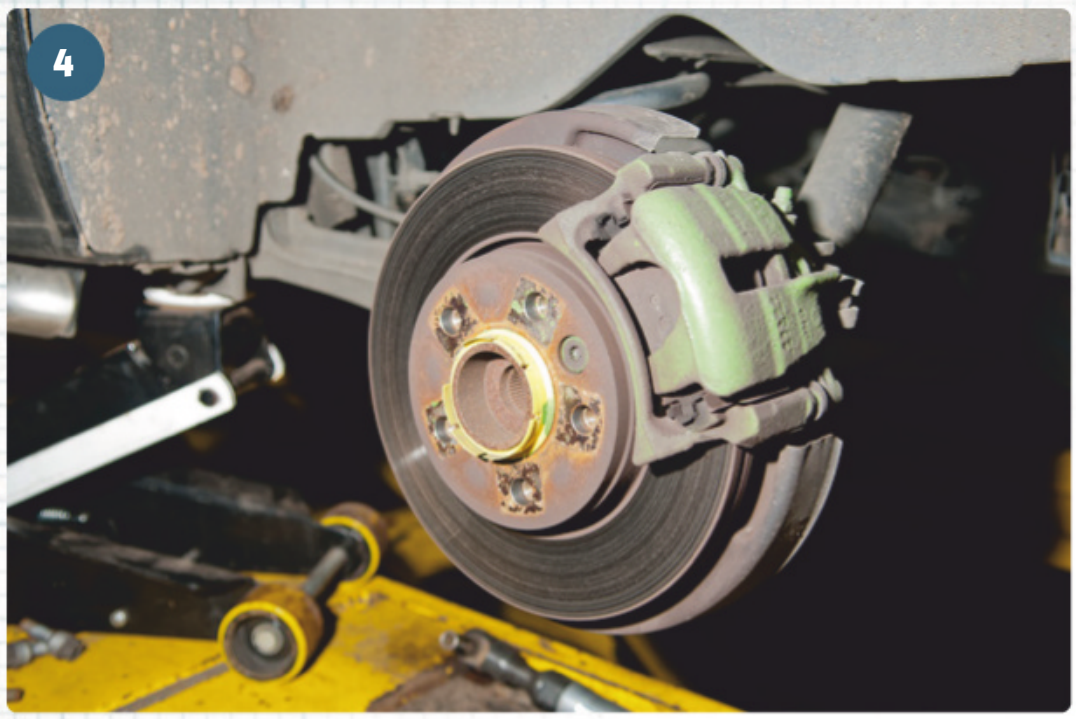
Not especially technical - but it can be VERY time consuming to remove the old bushes.

Do you love the smell of burning rubber, and the sound of swear words filling the air ? Then fitting replacement bushes is the feature for you. A few issues ago we replaced the front bushes on a T6 - and now we are going to fit the rear bushes; it's too much to physically do in a day, or run in the same feature. If the road-holding on your VW T6 is getting a bit sloppy, then the most likely suspect for this problem is worn suspension bushes - it's time to check them out and replace them. Or maybe you have fitted bigger wheels and lowered your van and now the suspension doesn't sit right ? Thanks to modern technology you no longer have to replace like for like - you can replace the rubber versions with made-to -measure performance polyurethane units; they're better in every respect.

The advantages of polyurethane over original rubber bushes are prolonged tyre life, improved handling, and increased safety due to better braking stability. They will last much longer than rubber bushes but are up to 25% stiffer than new rubber items, with exactly the same noise absorbing properties. These bushes also come with a lifetime warranty. There are various sizes to choose from for the anti-roll bar bushes - so make sure you know before you order them.

Allow the best part of a day for this - I promise you it might not seem that complicated - and to be honest it's not - but there is one stage that will take a LOT of time and swearing. Thanks to Will Chubbs for his skills and getting his hands dirty. After these have been fitted you will need to bleed the brakes and then check your tracking / wheel alignment - but that's a whole different feature.





STEP ONE

Jack up the van then transfer to axle stands or if you're lucky put the van on the ramps. Remove the 8mm self-tapping- type bolts down the side of the plastic undertray along the sills to allow access to the suspension parts.

STEP TWO

Remove the anti-roll bar - 13 mm bolt on each end and 12 mm spline bolts.

STEP THREE

Now jack up the rear. It's a shame that VW positioned the jacking point just where you need to be, to remove the rear wishbones - so you will need to find an alternative location.

STEP FOUR

With the van supported remove the wheel, unplug the ABS sensor, in the back of the hub. Then clamp off the brake pipes and remove the brake caliper.

STEP FIVE

Next you need to remove the rear wishbone itself. The bush bolts are 21 mm, as is the connection to the bottom of the shock absorber. You will need to hold the nut inside the sill where the wishbone is attached to the chassis. The spring will just wiggle out.

STEP SIX

Now we come to the fun part; removing the original VW bushes. In an ideal world these would be worn out and easy to remove - that's would be why you were fitting new ones. But this T6 was only a year old and the bushes were in very good shape. We used a hammer and air chisel, a sharp knife and even a blow torch to remove them! And lots of swear words... I love the smell of burning rubber in the morning.

STEP SEVEN

Old and new together.

STEP EIGHT

Once you have removed the rubber bushes, give the surface of the wishbone a clean if required and start to fit the new bushes - it's a lot easier than removing the old bushes. The bushes fit in two halves with an inner metal sleeve. Use the lubrication supplied to make life even easier.

STEP NINE

Now you need to refit the wishbone in the reverse order. Don't tighten everything up until it's in perfectly in position - you may need some wiggle room to do all the bolts up again.

STEP TEN

Don't forget to connect the brake pipes, handbrake cable and ABS sensor. And obviously fit the caliper back on before you bleed the brakes. Then do it all again on the other side.

STEP ELEVEN

Remove the old bushes on the anti-roll bar - they just pop off by hand. Check you ordered the correct size for the new bushes and pop them into place.

STEP TWELVE

Then re-fit the bar in the reverse order that you removed it, using the same bolts. The final step is to have all your suspension checked with laser wheel alignment to ensure the setting are correct.

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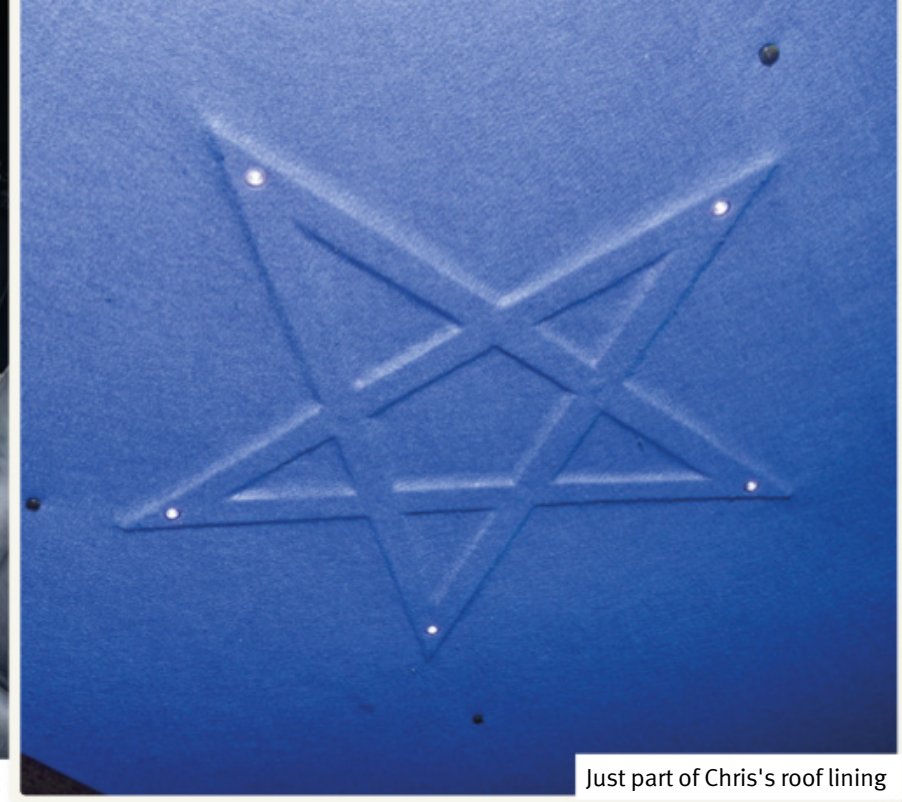
If you've seen Diana Brown's striking yellow T4 'Phoenix' which featured on the cover of issue 80 then you will very likely also have met 'Merlin'

Anne Rogers

SOUTHCOAST TRANSPORTERS

Subaru's up front



Just part of Chris's roof lining

The two buses frequently travel together as Merlin is the regular drive of Chris Brown, Di's husband and partner in the running of the ever-expanding club South Coast Transporters, a number of whose member vans we have featured in these pages, including another one in this issue. So, we're probably a bit overdue in taking a look at Chris's own and equally eye-catching T4!

BVW (before VWs) Chris had been into the Japanese car scene, which he referred to as 'money, money, money!' when we met up to discuss Merlin. Hmm, the VW scene has some similarities after all, not to mention certain extra costs with Merlin, which we'll get to later!

Merlin was not the Brown's first Transporter; Di had owned buses previously. Before Merlin came along, she and Chris were travelling about in Di's old pre-Phoenix white T4 'Dilly' when the gearbox went, and shortly afterwards so did the van. But Chris and Di wanted to go camping and they wanted to camp in a van, so it was time for an Internet search for a replacement. It was actually Di who found and bought it, and when Chris first saw their new bus it looked so high that he actually got underneath it to make sure it wasn't a 4WD! It wasn't... It was however generally sound. An Indian Blue 1998 panel van with a 1.9 litre 102bhp engine and absolutely no 'extras' whatsoever. After the startling first impressions with the ride height, pretty much the first job was to drop it to a more visually

A small square of coloured tin foil became the basis of the colour which Merlin now wears, which is in fact a Chevrolet hue

Bus Details

What did the van start as? T4 Panel Van

Colour? Chevrolet Blue

SWB/LWB? SWB

BHP? 102

Wheel type and size? 18" BBS Alloys

Tyres? 225/40/18

Lowered? Yes, 60mm

Why is it special to you? It's part of the family, and SCT has grown from this one van.

Bearing allegiance

‘You can’t expect it to be perfect all the time’!

pleasing height (depth?). A new set of Euro look Mercedes 17” alloys went on, and smart and comfortable Subaru driver and passenger seats replaced the original factory fitted ones. In the back a full width rock and roll bed was installed. The bed was an absolute bargain as it was given to them! Merlin is unusually cupboard free for a camper, but Chris says he ‘doesn’t do cupboards’, preferring to store things beneath the bed or in crates for easy moving out into an awning, or under a canopy when the weather is ok.

By now they were out and about camping and took the van along to a show. At which point Chris thought ‘we’d better do something more with ours’... They had already been thinking of a re-spray, but weren’t sure what colour to go for. I’ve heard all kinds of reasons for colour choices, but this is the first van I’ve known to have the colour chosen because of an Easter egg! Yep, you read that right. Unwrapping a tiny chocolate egg one day they thought ‘that colour could work, if it could be matched’, and so a small square of coloured tin foil became the basis of the colour which Merlin now wears, which is in fact a Chevrolet hue. (Did the Easter egg manufacturers know their eggs are clad in a Chevvie colour, I wonder?)

The bonnet art was done by Sammy Cave of Re-Born to be Wild, at Dubs in the Middle a few years ago. The weather at the time was not exactly ideal for airbrushing a van in a field – I’m told the lightning on the van is a reflection of the weather at the time! Asking why the name Merlin, and then the artwork, Chris says he has no idea how it got the name, but he says their van has definitely added

Smoked Crystal rear lenses

Sammy Cave's artwork

‘Something falls apart, you repair it, then you drive’ Chris says, wryly remarking that vans ‘eat holes in your pockets’

magic to their lives. I like that!

Despite the minimalist approach to the interior, the Browns wanted something a bit different, so they went to Greg Radomski at Hydro Tuning for some flocking and hydro dipping of door cards and dash. In the back, Chris designed and installed the one-piece headliner and lights. Outside, the wheels were once again swapped, this time for a set of refurbished 18” BBS alloys which had the look Chris was after, and which really do look perfect on the van. Sidebars with ‘T4’ ends went on, and the van has sported the twin stainless-steel exhaust for the last six years.

Over the years different things have needed doing which Chris rightly says is part and parcel of ownership. It’s a cycle: ‘Something falls apart, you repair it, then you drive’ he says, wryly remarking that vans eat holes in your pockets. But despite that Merlin is firmly established as part of the family. Chris loves the van as it is, and says he will never get rid of it, no matter what.

And that resolution has been tested over the years with various mechanical hiccups, many of which were sorted out by TH Performance in Havant. It was most sorely tested last year when Merlin’s 1.9 engine went bang in a big and terminal way. At this point, many would have decided it was time for a change of van,

Engine transplants do stretch the boundaries of technical hitches a bit

but not Chris. Instead he decided it was time for Merlin to have some extra not-especially-wizardy power, so bought a donor van with a 2.5 TDI engine. Fitting the 'new' engine with the help of good friends Pete and Jess, in the rain, discovering 'lots of extra bits', was possibly not one of the high spots of Chris's van ownership. On the upside, it goes a lot quicker now. Chris comments 'You can't expect it to be perfect all the time'! Very true, but engine transplants do stretch the boundaries of technical hitches a bit.

Whatever, he and Di still love their van, and Merlin looks great either alone or alongside Phoenix. Both vans are regularly used to carry kit and supplies to South Coast Transporters events, or to various shows throughout the season. Chris says Merlin has 'done them really well' and I think he means that positively – although he did also comment that during the engine incident, there was a moment when he felt like torching it!

Merlin still holds his magic for the Browns, who if anything have grown to love him more through the ups and downs of ownership. He's loved 'just as he is', and you can't say fairer than that. Although the Brown's VW fleet is not necessarily complete...

Chris

And I'd like to thank:

Greg at HydroTuning – find them on Facebook

Terry at TH Performance - www.thperformance.co.uk

Pete Callen and Jess for working on the engine swap in the rain!

Di – Of his moaning - 'Thanks for listening!'

The photos were taken at Simply VW in the grounds of the National Motoring Museum at Beaulieu, with their kind permission

BUS OF THE YEAR 2019

We asked nine of our regular contributors to select their favourite bus of the year. What we'd like you to do is choose your favourite from these, then vote by either visiting www.vwbusmagazine.com/vote or going to our Facebook page and following the link. The voting closes on 20th January. The winner will be announced live on stage at Camper Mart on 2nd February. And we will also publish the winners in Issue 94. Happy voting!

ANDY STRETTON - YELLOW T6 – ISSUE 92

JIMMER: JOINT EDITOR

I love everything about this bus the colour, stance and all the extras Andy chose. But the biggest thing for me is its petrol and Bristol is planning on banning diesel vans soon. I want this van!

MATT EPPS - BLUE T4 - ISSUE 86

ALAN HAYWARD: JOINT EDITOR

This bus has the lot, a clean cohesive design, a good paint job, subtle exterior mods and some killer wheels. On the day of the shoot the weather was filthy, but the bus's class shone through. It's everything a T4 should be.

ANDI HARLOW - TWO TONE T4 - ISSUE 81

KIRSTY DALTON: DESIGNER

This bus caught my eye with the two-tone paintwork. The van has a lovely retro feel with lots of copper and orange accents throughout. I think the moon hubcaps are a nice touch too! All details have been considered and I would gladly drive this bus!

DIRTY WEEKENDERS' - GRASS T5 - ISSUE 87

DAVID ECCLES: COLUMNIST

I first saw this Dirty Weekender T5 five years ago and it immediately took me back to an image of I saw in the 70s of a Beetle covered in grass. In a world dominated by shiny vans or stunning paintwork, this bus dares to be different - very different and looks as fresh as it did five years ago.

JOHN JEFFRISS - RED T4 DOKA - ISSUE 88

STEVE EDWARDS: COLUMNIST

John Jeffriss built a very cool van a while back, he'd started re-running that process with his Dad and his Doka until sadly his father passed away. John continued the build as a tribute, he did a totally incredible job and one his dad would surely have been proud of.

BLAINE SUTTON – 6R+ - ISSUE 72

ADAM HOWARD: FREELANCER

I chose this because it's a feature that I have genuinely worked on from start to finish, but more than that, having met the owner in person, I picked up on his infectious enthusiasm for all things VW and note the time and effort that went into building a truly stunning bus.

SHANE PHILLIPS - GREY T4 - ISSUE 83

ANDREW THOMPSON: FREELANCER

For me Bus Of The Year has got to go to Shane Phillips aka Scarface Lowriders, although this maybe more than just "Bus Of The Year" award in my mind. Over the last couple of years Shane has been on hand for T4 owners helping them out and making lowering the front of the T4 a much easier job with his relocation shock plates. He is a sound guy with a quality bus as well.

LEE WILSON - GREY T6 - ISSUE 88

ANNE ROGERS: FREELANCER

Tetraplegic Lee Wilson knew exactly what he wanted: "It had to be a VW Transporter and it had to look cool." It is, and it does! Lots of people say their vans have changed their lives, and Lee's truly has. And did I mention it's completely cool?

UBERBUS - BLUE T6 - ISSUE 85

SIMON COOKE: FREELANCER

As usual a tough choice - but this year I'm going to go with the Uberbus T6 Swamper - the ability to go anywhere you like, but in perfect luxury. If only I had a spare £50,000!

LAST YEARS WINNER

CRAIG KINCAID – DORY THE GRAND TOURER – ISSUE 75

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Sun, Shingle And Seals

Whilst in East Anglia with ‘George’, his trusty T6 camper, Mike Trippitt goes looking for seals along the shores of north Norfolk and finds Mr. Bean

Mike Trippitt

Some seals get a bad deal. In the sea sharks and whales predate them. On land hunters club them to death. In captivity they are made to perform unnaturally for our entertainment and around our shores, they are injured and endangered by humans and our plastic.

Since my teenage years, when television footage brought the scourge of seal pup culling to a world audience, I’ve had an affection for these ungainly, though cute, animals. So, whilst in Norfolk with my campervan ‘George’, I decided to take a trip out to Blakeney Point to see seals in their natural, undisturbed environment.

We were staying at Burnham Deepdale Backpackers site. It’s halfway between Hunstanton and Wells-next-the-Sea on the A149, and a great base from which to explore the beaches, creeks, footpaths and villages of north Norfolk. But before heading out in a boat, we went to Hunstanton. On the resort’s seafront, facing out over The Wash towards Lincolnshire, Hunstanton Sea Life’s seal hospital has been nursing seals back to health for thirty years. “They do some amazing work here with seals,” says aquarist, and captive animal keeping graduate, Nicky Nelson. Her Antipodean accent is a long way from a local, clipped Norfolk lilt. “I actually moved over here to work with seals. They are my passion. There are more places here where you can work with seals than in Australia, and I ended up at Hunstanton Sea Life. If you wanted someone to talk about seals, you’ve probably got the person who loves them most!”

George at Blakeney

Mr Bean

Mary the former lifeboat

What You Need To Know

Seals give birth to one pup at a time. Grey seal pups are born in the winter months on the beaches. They weigh about 10 kg at birth. Common Seal pups are born in the water in the summer months and weigh about 6 kg when born. Blakeney Point is the largest seal colony in England.

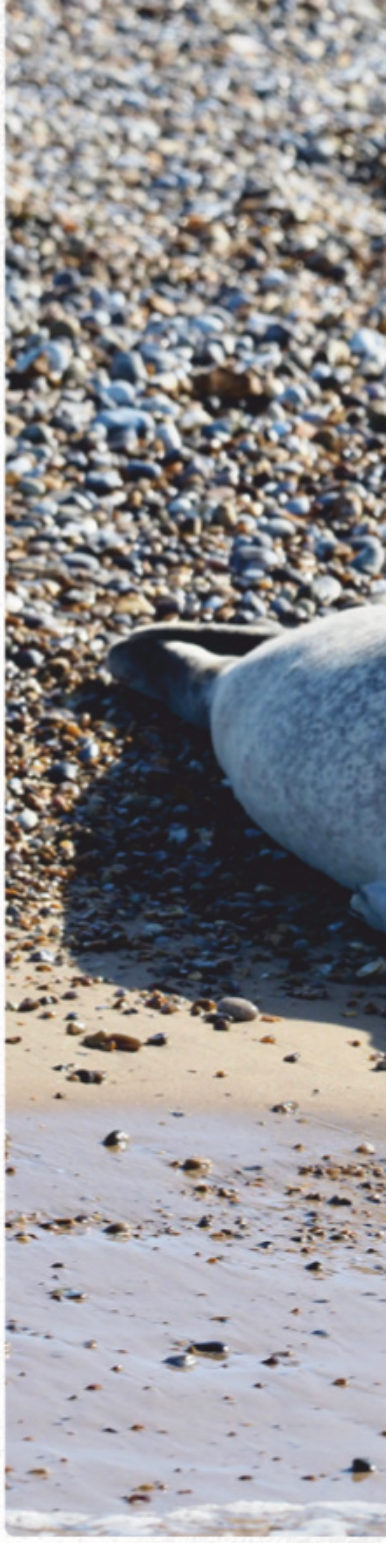
So many seals need rescuing, especially due to human interference

Two species of seal naturally live in the waters of the UK: The Grey seal, and the smaller Common, or Harbour seal. Both are native to Norfolk, with populations living from as far north as the rivers and creeks around The Wash, to Great Yarmouth in the south. But Nicky says that it is not just from local shores that seals are brought in. "It's from all over. We have some amazing rescue groups that we work with. We've even had seals come all the way up from Hull and Scotland, because hospitals have been so full all around the UK this year." Nicky says that Sea Life takes in abandoned or injured seal pups, both Common seals and Grey seals, and "treats and rehabilitates them", so that they can be released back out into the wild to "live on for years to come. It's a really big issue at the moment," she says. "So many seals need rescuing especially due to human interference and dog attacks, and especially with so much of the plastic pollution out in the oceans. There is so much intake needed, we've had a lot transferred down to us when we've actually had the space."

Nicky's words "human interference" and "dog attacks" worry me. I'm enlightened, but remained concerned, by what she says: "A lot of times people really do mean well when they see a seal pup on the beach. They automatically think that seals should be in water, but seals are actually mammals. The mother will go out fishing for hours at a time, so she can come back and give her pup milk.

"If we go up and touch a pup, we leave our scent on it, so when

Beans Boats and Morston Quay



Once our little craft reaches Blakeney Point we find an array of basking seals laid out on the shingle before us

the seal comes back it might not recognize it. If we huddle around a pup, the mother will see a bunch of strange people standing around it and be too scared to return. So, she abandons it." Dog owners are also well meaning and don't deliberately let their animals harm seals. But, says Nicky: "Dogs are always going to be the first on a beach to find a seal, because seals have a very distinct smell and dogs have a very strong nose. Movies portray seals as sea dogs or seal puppies that can really be playful. Seals are actually incredibly aggressive. They can be playful and curious when they want to be, but when a dog is bothering them, not only is the dog a danger to the seal, the seal is actually quite a danger to the dog. They have a horrible bite and carry really harmful diseases."

Since opening, Sea Life has rescued over 750 seals, and 50 from Norfolk and surrounding counties in the last twelve months alone. Their mothers have abandoned some of those just because humans have got too close. Nicky's plea is clear: "Watch from a distance".

So, when I head out on Beans Seal Trips' vessel 'Seafarer' into the blue rising tide of Blakeney Harbour, I know I'll be taking pictures of seals from a safe distance: a job for a telephoto lens. On my arrival at Morston Quay bathed in crisp morning sunshine, a friendly-looking man is tending his boats. "Are you Mr. Bean?" "I am," says Graham Bean of Beans Seal Trips. "And are you

A seal trip boat and Blakeney Pont

The Sea Life centre at Hunstanton

I feel transported into their world. This is their home, their environment. We are merely privileged visitors

the boss?" "They say I am," he says with a smile. "Though they keep telling me I should retire!" Graham is instantly likeable, and happy to talk. The Bean family have been running ferries and seal boats to Blakeney Point since the 1930s, and along with three other family run businesses take increasing number of visitors on the hour-long trip around Blakeney Harbour to the seals. Although the sail trip businesses advertise at Blakeney Quay the little boats now ply from Morston Quay, one-and-a-half miles up the road. "We used to run out of Blakeney, but the harbour has silted up so much," says Graham. "We have a very short window up at Blakeney, about two hours altogether, so we've all shifted to Morston where we have got about four hours of tide."

Graham tells me that on the trip today we will see Common seals, but Blakeney is now getting a lot of Grey seals: "Last year there were just over 3000 pups. So, at Christmas time there were probably six or seven thousand seals here. The pups are weaned at about two months, so by January they are ready to go." Each year Grey seals and their young pups make for the Fjords in Norway where herring are spawning. But they then make their way back down the North Sea to Norfolk. "They follow the herring and any other fish that come down this way, just like our fishing fleets used to do years ago," says Graham. "It's

Advertising at Blakeney Quay

Basking at Blakeney Point

The seals are unconcerned by our presence. They ignore our flotilla of seal trip boats

a bit like us really. We know our roots. We go off and then come back. They do the same."

I join helmsman John and crewman Norman on 'Seafarer' as the boat leaves the quay and chugs out into the calm waters. Blakeney's natural harbour lies behind a spit of land formed by longshore drift: sand and shingle eroded from the cliffs at Great Yarmouth is deposited at Blakeney by wind and tide. The landscape changes constantly. Blakeney Point moves westwards by one metre each year. Though our purpose today is to see seals, the boat trip alone is fascinating. Norman's commentary is both interesting and informative, and he teaches a simple way to remember the species: "Grey

The 'new' old Lifeboat station at Blakeney Point

I actually moved over here to work with seals, they are my passion

seals look like a dog and Common seals look like a cat. 'C' for cat and 'C' for Common." We pass Blakeney's old lifeboat stations. There was an operational lifeboat here between 1820 and 1935, but harbour silting caused its closure when launching the boat within the four hours required became impossible. The lifeboat did however save 100 lives, and both the 'old' and 'new' lifeboat houses stand to this day. Norman draws passengers' attention to a curious vessel anchored in the harbour. It has a black wooden shed-like top and a blue wooden hull. Norman says that 'Mary's' hull is "a former lifeboat from down the coast at Winterton" but is now a holiday home. The hull, he tells us, is 113 years old, and adds: "They really built them well in those days."

Once our little craft reaches Blakeney Point we find an array of basking seals laid out on the shingle before us. It's a wonderful sight, and so rare to see so many seals at such close quarter. I feel transported into their world. This is their home, their environment. We are merely privileged visitors. The seals are unconcerned by our presence. They ignore our boat and the flotilla of seal trip boats out here. Ninety percent of a seal's time is spent hauled out basking on land. None shows any sign of doing anything energetic whilst we're watching.

With John at the helm our boat trundles back and forth parallel to the beach for a few minutes, before turning for home. As we head to Morston, hundreds of pairs of eyes look back at us, but hundreds more remain closed. Under Blakeney's blue sky, warm sun and in the gentle swell of an azure sea, there aren't many better places on earth for the seals or for me to be.

Blakeney Point Seal Trip Operators:

Beans Seal Trips
www.beansboattrips.co.uk,
01263 740505 and 01263 740038

Bishops Boats
www.bishopsboats.co.uk, 01263 747753

Ptarmigan Blakeney Point Seal Trips
www.blakeneypointsealtrips.co.uk,
01263 740792 and 07563 332088

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www.sealtrips.co.uk, 01263 740791

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PeepShow

Whether it's a show winner or daily driver, share with us why you love your bus, this month all the vans are from Dubz Outlaws, find them on Facebook.

T6

Candy Van

I'm a member of the Dubz Outlaws group and my van started its journey as a cat c damaged vehicle. It turned up on a trailer to the body shop next to my work. They supplied my last van, but knew I wanted to go newer, with a better spec. So, to tease me, they parked this 2017 Highline with 10,000 miles on the clock outside my window. I knew this so didn't bite initially. I knew it would only be a matter of time before they started asking "why don't you upgrade to this van" When they did I said, "it's reflex Silver I don't fancy it". "Okay" they said, "how about we paint it any colour you want"? Well in that case...

Damien Woods

Harris Creed

This is our bus, Harris. My soon to be wife and I have owned Harris for the past three years. He started off as a basic van, but we've slowly been converting it into our own personal camper, we've still got a lot on the "To Do" list, but we've loved every minute of it so far. Harris got his name as we have retrimmed the cab area in Harris Tweed, making it unique to us. In the back I've tried making it really rustic, with the reclaimed pallet wood, burnt effect panels and a copper lined gin cupboard at the end of the bench! I have also added an oak step for something a little different. We're looking forward to booking our camping trips for the coming year with the Dubz Outlaws, happy dubbing!

Matt Pearce

T5

T5

Bird's Bus

Let me introduce Timpson. He's a 2005, T5, 1.9 with a T5.1 facelift all round. He started life as a Caravelle, so he's a twin slider. After having his seats removed, he benefited from a full leisure electric re-fit, both 240v and 12v. In the back he features a home-made sliding bed with storage and a fridge pod housing a CR50 fridge, complimented by a T4 Life pod with a Smev 9222 on top. Timpson has recently had a HiLo Sport roof fitted by Vipertech in Manchester whom he highly recommends. Timpson is lowered on coil-overs with a hub modification and 30mm spacers with X5 alloys. Soon to be added are a sound system and a revamp in the back, as well as some paint correction. All so he can rock out with the Dubz Outlaws at future events and provide owners Bella and Ryan's friends with entertainment at lonely campsites.

Ryan Bird

T4

Elegant Outlaw

So, this is my bus, a 2000 panel van in original Elegance Green, which according to VW is one of only a handful made. My partner Stacey bought it for me for my birthday, as she knew I had always wanted one. Reading the feature in Issue 83 on Shane Phillips' (Scarface Lowriders) bus, made me want to bite the bullet. It was basically a bodge-job on wheels when I got it, so I stripped it back. Between my oldest friend Gary and I plus my three VW obsessed young sons, we started to make it road worthy. We have lowered it 100mm, put a bench seat in the back, and added 14k miles to the clock in six months. In between using it to get me to my day job as a groundworker and for holidays, days out as a family, and with the Dubz Outlaws

Shane Langley

Show Yours

GET YOUR BUS FEATURED

Send a brief description about your Bus (130 words max) and three high-res pictures to: **alan.hayward@vwbusmagazine.com** with the subject 'Reader's Rides'.

Natural Progression

When you start to convert vans as a hobby and your first four Transporters are T4s, then it makes perfect sense that your fifth van is a T5

Steve “autoholic” Edwards John Sousa

Transporter HQ spoiler

The story starts in a familiar way for many, Ryan Gooding was looking for a cheap van to use for work, he didn't care what make it was, the price just had to be right. Whilst working in his plastering business he spotted a 1991 T4 on a driveway with a For Sale sign in the window, on further investigation he found the price was in his range and so he snapped it up. The van provided sterling service for about six months, before Ryan decided that he'd like his van to serve double duty as a work van and 'day van' when he headed to the beach, he is a keen surfer. Of course, one thing led to another, the van was converted, but eventually sold on. It was replaced by a van from 1998 and as Ryan seemed to enjoy the builds, that one was re-built and sold too. Examples from 2001 and 2002 soon followed the same path.

In early 2018 Ryan and his wife, Hannah, found out they were going to welcome an addition to their family

In early 2018 Ryan and his wife, Hannah, found out they were going to welcome an addition to their family, in the form of a daughter, Olivia. That changed the requirements for camping and storage became a premium. While attending an event, Dubs at Stowford, held at Stowford Farm Meadows near Ilfracombe, Ryan suggested to Hannah that they sell their current T4 and buy a T5 with an elevating roof, something they had not previously had. Once he got over the shock of the speed of Hannah's positive response, he knew he'd have to move quickly just in case she changed her mind. Enlisting the help of best friend, Chris, they both hit the Internet without delay, looking for suitable

Bus Details

What did the van start as? Panel

Colour? Rivera Blue

SWB/LWB? SWB

BHP? 140

Wheel type and size? Iniovit Turbines 20"

Tyres? 245/45/20

Lowered? Yes, as low as I can get away with

Why is it special to you? It's a bit of freedom for our new family and our daughter loves spending the night in it

Lowered on V-Maxx coil-overs

20" Inovit Turbines

Mk 7 Golf wheel

While attending Dubs at Stowford, held at Stowford Farm Meadows, Ryan suggested to Hannah that they sell their current T4 and buy a T5 instead

candidates. They both found a low mileage example with a full-service history for sale in Leicestershire. The only downside was that the van had been used by a builder for work and was not only full of brick dust and other associated debris, but it had suffered quite a few dings and dents. However, the amount the fella was asking for was fair and Ryan acted fast to make sure he didn't miss out. So, with Hannah's help, the couple drove up from their Mid Devon base to grab the van, returning home in both vehicles that same night, arriving in the very early hours.

The dings and dents were of little consequence, as Chris works at a bodyshop, C&R Repairs, based in Exeter. So, in truth, the condition of the metalwork was a secondary consideration. Before any work commenced Ryan took a trip to Westdubs at their Worcestershire base, to collect one of their pop tops. This was then strapped to the uncut roof of the van, to get it back safely to C&R's base. The lovely people at Westdubs took the time to assist Ryan, by marking out on his van's roof where he should make his cuts, prior to loading the vacuum formed roof that was supplied in white.

Once back in Devon, and after a little bit of agonising, the first incision into the van's roof was made and the supplied strengthening frame installed, Ryan was very happy with how well the frame fitted, once the hole had been made. The next thing to be cut out were the holes for the windows. Then Chris went to work

When it came to the interior, Ryan took care of that himself

to take care of all the bodywork imperfections and to change the vans paint colour from white to red... After painting the shell of the van, Chris called Ryan and asked him to come down to see the colour in the flesh. Chris wasn't sure it was really what Ryan wanted. He was right. Even though it had taken a couple of weeks of indecision before arriving at the crimson shade, it was decided that it really wasn't the way to go after all. Obviously, a replacement hue was needed and pretty quickly! Ryan had owned a Mk1 Golf some years previously that had been painted in Porsche Riviera Blue. He really liked the look of it so that was chosen as the replacement colour. Fortunately, the paint supplier was still open and so the order was placed and Chris set about sanding the red paint back, to accept the new blue tint that same evening. Now that's a friend! On that attempt, he got to complete the entire job, painting the roof as well as the new spoilers, front and back, which were supplied by Transporter HQ. A full V-Maxx Xtreme coil-over suspension kit was also purchased from the same supplier. Ryan wanted to lower the van, but not so much that he might cause the damage, that he felt his local roads could easily do, if the van's altitude was too close to the ground.

When it came to the interior, Ryan took care of that himself. After insulating, ply lining and carpeting, he bought some sheets of laminated 15mm ply from MKM in Honiton and a pattern to work from off eBay. Having had Tambour rolling doors in his previous vans, he knew the advantages of installing them,

The dings and dents were of little consequence as Chris works at a bodyshop, C&R Repairs in Exeter

over the purchase price. So, he dispensed with two doors that were due to be included and replaced them with the rolling variety. Giving access to the storage, no matter what position the rock and roll bed was in. The bed was supplied by Nathan Yardley who also provided the foam that covers it, all the trimming was completed by All Sewn Up in Exmouth, who utilised some 'recycled leather' and complimented that with tweed inserts in the front and back. The recycled leather is made with offcuts from the manufacture of clothing, handbags, shoes, boots and furniture. The process involves shredding these offcuts, then mixing them with a binding agent to produce sheets that can be made in any colour. The custom logo, “Puddy’s Conversions”, was embroidered into the rear headrests, Puddy was Ryan’s nickname at school and it was a bit of fun to include it. Hannah had seen the pop-up plug sockets, which include both regular three pin and USB varieties on Pinterest, and suggested that Ryan include one in the van, for when they are on a hook up. So of course, being a good husband, that is exactly what Ryan did. Up front the three-seat configuration was retained to keep Olivia close, when she’s securely strapped into her baby seat, although the bench is on a swivel base.

To keep the van between the ditches and avoiding the potholes, the standard steering wheel has been replaced by a much better looking, flat bottomed version from a Mk7 Golf.

Ryan is in no hurry to part with his van, but never say never, and maybe the next one he converts will be a 5.1 or perhaps even a 6, to follow his evolutionary path.

Ryan

And I’d like to thank:

Chris Chapple - From C&R for doing the re-spray and his help fitting the pop top roof.

Westdubs - For supplying the roof and being so friendly and helpful as we have never fitted one before.

All Sewn Up in Exmouth - For the upholstery.

Nathan Yardley - For supplying the rock and roll bed

Paul at MKM Honiton - For sourcing the Superva ply for the rear units

And my wife Hannah Gooding, for putting up with all the long evening and weekends, so that I could get the van finished

Living with Low-Pros

Earlier this year we fitted some 'new to market' Low Pro coil-overs from Tux Auto Design to a T5 – we wanted to know how are they holding up? Simon Cooke

Back in the summer we ran a step by step fitting feature on Low Pro coil-overs for a T5 That was back when it was sunny, before all the rain and frost. The lucky person who received the kit was Steve Redding - although to be fair we did make him work for them - we only supplied them, then watched him roll about on the floor while he was fitting them to his new (to him) T5.

The coil overs were fully adjustable allowing for a drop in ride height of between 30-80 mm on the front and 30 - 70 mm on the rear. We fitted them to Steve's new T5 project. He'd only owned it a week and had already changed the lights, the front panels and added some twenty-inch rims.

His first thoughts on seeing his new coil-overs? "It looks a really nice bit of kit, well made and solid and I'm looking forward to getting them fitted to my van." He fitted them on their lowest setting - and couln't see a good reason to ever adjust them again. Having fitted them he went and drove a few laps to get them bedded in. "I've just driven around our estate and there are some really bad roads around here and it felt good, a nice ride, but still with a bit of give in them," reported Steve.

We caught up with Steve six months down the line, to see if his initial impressions still stood. In that time there have been some changes to his van, with a full 5.1 front end transformation, including new DLR headlights and a Sportline bumper. The interior is still bare. During that time it's been used on a regular basis, including helping him to recently move to a new house, where it certainly was certainly working for its keep. "Yes, I've driven it with some serious weight in - but I've left the suspension on its lowest setting and never felt the need to change it," said Steve. "I've not had to change anything, and I've had no contact with the ground - even with my new front end. I'd say they have settled a bit, so it's maybe a slightly softer and more supple ride than when they were first fitted," he continued. "I've had a look underneath several times and they look as good as when we fitted them no paint chipping or rust that I could see. I'd certainly recommend them to others - especially for the great price!"

So, there you have it, so far so good, no problems to report and offering a good ride whilst being 'comfortably low'. We may well come back to this in a year or so to see how they are holding up over a much longer time period.

DETAILS...

Price as tested: £549 fitted
Company: Coil-Overs
Company Name: Tux Auto Design
Address: Unit B3
Spen Beck Business Park
Cleckheaton
BD19 4EW
Phone: 01274 924359
Email: enquiries@tuxauto.com
Website: www.tuxauto.com

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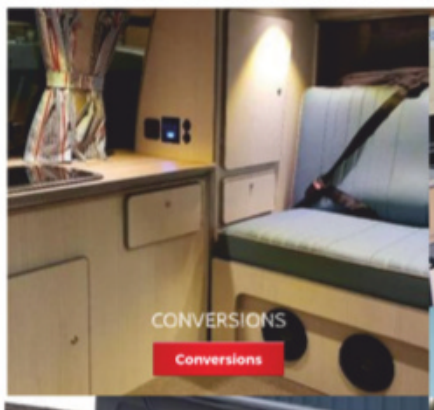

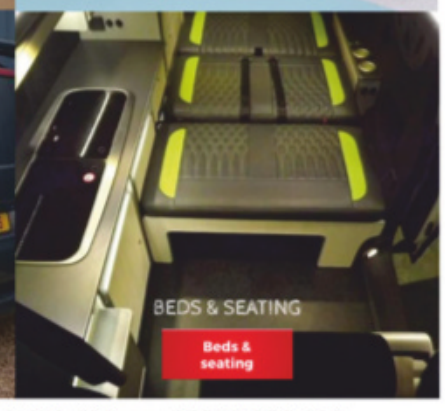

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Xtreme Wake Open Day

So, you've got your van and you're all set up, but where to go? Well, if you fancy messing about on the water, how about a little wakeboarding?

Steve "autoholic" Edwards

So, what is wakeboarding anyway? I'm glad you asked: It's a water sport that was developed by surfers who were looking for a wave to ride when the sea was calm. This became wake surfing, where the rider is initially towed behind a boat before letting go of the rope and using the wake created to keep up. Wakeboarding is often described as a blend of snowboarding, surfing and skateboarding and it involves one wide board rather than a pair of water skis, the rider utilises bindings to keep their feet attached to the board. In addition to boats, that unsurprisingly require a large expanse of water, some centres have been built that use a cable system to tow the rider. There are two types of cable centres available, firstly there is a circular cable where the riders are equally spaced and move at a set speed while the second uses a single wire driven by an operator on shore. The circular cables have the advantage of being able to accommodate multiple riders at once, while the single gives more one to one time, and is perfect for coaching.

Lesson over: The Xtreme Wake park is situated in Grendon Lakes set in 150 acres of countryside, there are twelve lakes, two of which are devoted to water-sports, while the others make up some of the finest fishing water in the area. After the previous occupants left, Jay Garfield of Xtreme Van (his shop van was featured in

The Xtreme Wake park is situated in Grendon Lakes set in 150 acres of countryside, there are 12 lakes, two of which are devoted to watersports

Issue 81 and made the front cover), being a wakeboarding fan, heard the news and spotted the opportunity. The park had two separate cables running the length of the lake, but Jay felt that they should just run one for the time being and find another use for the other side. Running a single cable has the benefit that the driver can not only take the rider at a speed that suits them, so it's great for beginners, but also they can return the rope to them if they let go, which is a huge advantage over the circular cable. Should riders let go of that style, they have to swim to shore and return to the start, which in some cases can be a long walk and as riders buy cable time, spending time on foot is never good. The single cable system is very popular and that was proven when the British Water Ski and Wakeboard Level Three coach, Lex Balladon, confirmed that she would like to conduct her ladies only 'Wake Daze' coaching sessions at the park. These sessions are filled with not only boarding, but yoga and good vibes too, you can check her out on Facebook and at the Wake Daze website. Lex was joined by Team GB members Izzy Goode and Travis Beaton who both took to the water to strut their stuff on the day and to try out some new moves.

Once Jay had officially taken over the park the hard work

Jay's partner, Sarah, was busy all day long making sure everyone was welcomed and were having a good time

began, as the lake was in desperate need of attention, it took quite a few days to clean it up sufficiently and to make sure all the ramps, that can be used to perform tricks, where stable and fit for purpose. Once everything in the water was deemed safe the team added a fresh coat of paint and applied some not so subtle graphics to a couple of the ramps which of course is a great marketing strategy, as anyone taking photos can't help to include them in their shots. For the open day, the Xtreme team were joined by Alife and Ollie from Watersports World UK, who brought a range of equipment that was available to try and buy and Lex was on hand to give some expert advice for free. Jay's partner, Sarah, was

Once Jay had officially taken over the centre the work began as the lake was in desperate need of attention, it took quite a few days to clean it up sufficiently

busy all day long making sure everyone was welcomed and were having a good time, their kids even got involved too helping out. Some specially decorated and very delicious cupcakes accompanied the succulent barbeque that had been laid on to feed the folks who had come along to support the new venture.

Of course, word had got out and it wasn't just friends who made the trip to Grendon Lakes, there were some newbies who had such a good time that they took up the open day special offer that was available. Some took advantage of the camping and clubhouse facilities, which are located just a stone's throw from the park, and overlook the main lake to make a weekend of the occasion. Friend and wakeboard fan Howard Watkins bought his stunning Malibu boat onto the main lake and onlookers were treated to a display by Travis, who took the opportunity to get a workout in before he headed out to the Wakeboard World Championships. The Malibu boat has a hydraulically operated system that operates flat planes on either side of the vessel that unfold and allow the wave to be customised to make it suitable for either surfer or boarder.

So, if you're interested in having a go, whether you're a complete beginner or an experienced professional, check out Xtreme Wake on Facebook or Instagram to find out what's going on and for opening times. Even though the water temperature may be a little bracing, rest assured you'll receive a warm welcome and expert tuition.

Dubs At The Castle

Dubs in a haunted castle - what more could you want?

Simon Cooke

Dubs At The Castle - it's still got to be one of the best locations for a VW show. Part of the show is actually inside Caldicot Castle in South East Wales, where people have been living for 800 years and is now apparently inhabited by ghosts. Did anyone camping in the surrounding fields this year, or in any other years, see or hear anything which didn't sound human I wonder? Actually, scrub that question - it was a three-day VW show - so the chances of seeing and hearing things which you can't rationally explain are pretty high! For instance, I spotted no less than four Scooby Doo-themed vans - and even a complete set of Scooby Doo characters all dressed up and dancing in front of the main stage - or did I imagine that?

To be honest I was quite tempted to re-name the show Dogs At The Castle last year and not just because of the aforementioned Scooby Doo vision. Yes, of course, there are always dogs at VW shows, and DATC is no exception, but for some reason I noticed a lot more this year, or maybe that was just me too?

This year the event took place over the three days of 19th – 21st July, unfortunately the Friday featured one of those lovely summer storms which made life a bit more challenging for those trying to enter the site and set up for the weekend. There was also limited camping available on the Thursday night. On the camping side the show was a sell-out and I saw people camped up in places where I'd never seen vans parked before - although I suspect that many of the gaps in between were caused by the weather and the potential weather to come. As it turned out the Saturday and Sunday were not bad at all when it came to rainfall and people were able to sit around over the weekend without fear of drowning. Another bonus, apart from the weather improving over the weekend, was the fact that for many people it was now cheaper to drive into Wales, since the bridge tolls were scrapped at the start of the year.

The first ever DATC wedding also took place on Saturday

On the Saturday there is no official show & shine, that's traditionally on the Sunday, but there was a lovely display inside the castle itself of T3 / T25s and Early Bays; it's just a shame that for the past couple of years you have not been allowed to climb the towers to get a view of the

MFE 144H
RJH 197H
SDE 67G

tom dibb

T5 BEV

R615 WGK

Y10 SHH

BHU 271J
J8G CAH

AT THE SHOW

Eirwen is a local girl and this show is always in her must do show diary; she's been to the last seven DATC. Normally she'd be camping in her T4 - but that's off the road at the moment, so she's sharing her boyfriend's Crafter for the weekend instead. She says this year is a lot colder and wetter than 2018 when she ended up in the medical tent with heat stroke - not much of a danger of that happening this year!

I saw a complete set of Scooby Doo characters all dressed up and dancing in front of the main stage, or did I imagine that?

entire courtyard - which is ideal for overhead photos. I'm tall, but not enough to match being on the top of a 50-foot turret.

Assuming you didn't just want to park up and chill in your van/awning in the fields surrounds the castle (which many did - and why not?) - there were plenty of trees for those seeking shade, there was also a large choice of activities to keep you amused and relieve you of your money. There were traders to buy anything from a new T-Shirt to a Bay door from an auto jumble trader to tickets to rival VW shows. And of course, loads of food and drink to choose from. If you wanted something more active for the kids to take part in, there was the usual selection of fairground thrills and spills, or kids could get their faces painted, covered in glitter etc etc. The first ever DATC wedding also took place on Saturday. The fancy dress theme was Gangsters and Molls and there was live music everywhere you looked from Midday until well into the night.

Saturday also hosted the Old Skool bike show & shine, sponsored by CJ Motors, some of those competitors take things really seriously - even carrying them onto the show site so they didn't get muddy. Mind you that's nothing compared to the van owners - I heard a story of one owner who spent several hundred pounds getting his van valeted / detailed the week before the show to make sure it was looking its best; and after all that it didn't win...

Support for the show came from The Old Dub Shop, Uber Moose, Hayburner, Dubber's Delight, V-Dub Factory, AR Drainage, Autocamp, Classic Carpentry & Joinery and Simple Print Solutions. The event raised £4000 for charity.

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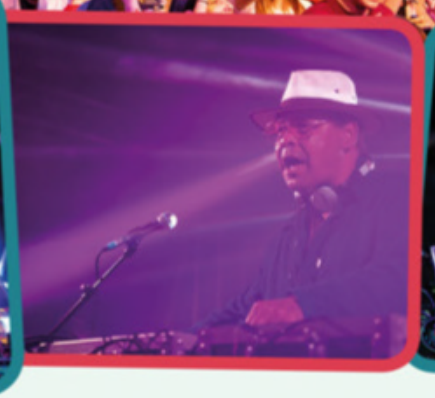

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Trading Up

Justin Williams got his first van twelve years ago, an 06 plate T5 kombi which he had converted to a Caravelle interior

Matt Bridge-Wilkinson

THULE
N'FERA SU1

18" Sportlines and colour coded Brembos

He only owned it for six months before a work colleague twisted his arm into selling it, albeit at a reasonable profit. That was the start of a long line of trading up, seven other vans followed, all of which were upgraded and then later sold on.

So it went for eleven more years. "Do you regret selling any of the previous vans?" I asked Justin. "Not at all, look at what I have now!" and yes looking at this beauty I can absolutely see why he has no regrets. As we sat chatting, admiring the stunning views across the sea at Tenby, his van literally shone like the sun.

"So how did this gorgeous van come to be?" Justin saw an ad on a popular car website for a chrome yellow van and instantly fell in love with the colour. It was a big purchase, but he did the sums, deliberated and decided to go for it. Sadly, it wasn't meant to be and this vehicle slipped through his fingers, much to his disappointment. "From that point on it had to be a chrome yellow bus." Justin told me with conviction, and I had no difficulty understanding why, it is a stunning colour. Chrome yellow is still relatively rare, so it was some time later before another one came up for sale. This time it was located in Hull, which couldn't be considered local to his home in West Wales. It was a low mileage; ex demo and Justin spoke to the dealer over a number of days to make this one his. Finally, the deal was done, the van was shipped to Wales, before he had even seen it in person. He wasn't disappointed.

Then came the joy of making it his own and getting it ready for camping. The 18" Sportlines

I will probably raise the suspension a little, mainly to save my mudguards

Bus Details

What did the van start as? T6 Kombi

Colour? Chrome Yellow

SWB/LWB? SWB

BHP? 204

Wheel type and size? VW Sportline 18"

Tyres? 255/45/18

Lowered? Yes on Bilstein B14

Why is it special to you? I love the colour, and the layout is completely unique and bespoke to me

Slidepods provide the cooking facilities

I am so lucky living in Pembrokeshire, to enjoy wonderful scenery and beautiful coastline I don't have to go far

already looked great, but the stance was something that was further improved with a set of Bilstein B14s, taking the bus 55mm lower. It really enhanced the already sporty looks, but Justin is now considering raising it a little. "The handling and performance of the 204bhp beast with the 6 speed manual gearbox is amazing with this stance, but I keep catching my mud-flaps." The final crucial detail was colour coded Brembo callipers to really finish the look.

What about the camping setup? "I knew I wanted a full width bed. I didn't want to waste any of the space, but I also have two kids so the flexibility of a decent seat was crucial. It's important to be safe when travelling and comfortable when sleeping." As a traffic officer in the Police Force, safety was a crucial consideration and a challenging career requires making the most of that priceless rest and relaxation time. What about the kitchen facilities? "I chatted to a lot of folks who have had full conversions and many told me they had never used the cooker inside. This made me think, I always tend to cook outside, so maybe it wasn't for me." Justin spotted the Slidepods solution and realised it could be the answer, not only that but a yellow unit would be possible too." With a major consideration being a full width bed and the ability to cook if desired, he soon realised a Slidepod was indeed the answer. In combination with a tailgate awning, even bad weather won't be an issue.

Initially Justin hadn't intended to have a pop-top, he came close

A van with a view

I knew I wanted a full width bed. I didn't want to waste any of the space, but I also have two kids so the flexibility of a decent seat was crucial

to fitting one from a different company, but after discussing it and Jonny Ashworth at Slidepods, he decided that the SCA roof with a wooden slatted bed, was just the ticket for ultimate comfort. The combination of the stunning panoramic canvas beautifully complimented the incredible view, what a way to relax. "The van is my daily transport and holiday camper, so I wanted it to be as good as it could be" this really shows in every detail of the van. It has a Webasto heater for all year-round use, cold will never be a barrier to staying away. There is also the addition of a TV to keep his son and daughter entertained on those 'occasional' rainy days in Wales and a huge amount of under bed storage. The drawer type fridge under the main bench seat has a great capacity, plus this style keeps the cold inside when you open it, unlike an upright where the cold air falls out. Even with this fridge, the storage space under the seat is still huge, enough for the windscreen cover, a tailgate awning and sleeping bags as well as pots and pans. Then there is the affectionately nicknamed 'Gin Cabinet' although on this trip I could also see a bottle of Barti Ddu, a wonderful spiced Welsh spirit, which I may or may not have tried later that day after work (it's delicious). "I just wanted something a little extra in the van and a small storage space that wouldn't interfere with the bed when out. Jonny from Slidepods custom made it and installed the LED lighting for that finishing touch." It's then that I notice the sticker on the van boldly stating

You never know what life will bring and it's important to make the most of the here and now, hence my motto; drink it whilst it's fizzy

"Drink it whilst it's fizzy", I asked Justin to explain. "I am so lucky living in Pembrokeshire, to enjoy wonderful scenery and beautiful coastline I don't have to go far. You never know what life will bring and it's important to make the most of the here and now, hence my motto; drink it while it's fizzy."

Are there any other modifications in the works I enquired, as we watched the sun continue to set over the Western side of Carmarthen bay and the walled town of Tenby. "I am in the process of changing over the blinds, and I will probably raise the suspension a little, mainly to save my mudguards. I may consider a leather retrim at some point, but for me it's already where I want it."

As the sun slowly dipped below the horizon, the last of the sun's rays were caught in the paint of this beautiful T6, I felt truly blessed to be part of our wonderful VW community. How great is it to meet fantastic people and photograph their beautiful vehicles in stunning locations? The answer is... Very.

The 'Gin Cupboard'

T6

Justin

And I'd like to thank:

Jonny at Slidepods – www.slidepods.co.uk

Meadow Farm Campsite in Tenby for the wonderful views and hospitality.

Evo Motion Design

Evo Design have probably designed and fabricated more VW interior units that I've had Big Macs

Simon Cooke

This story starts with Jonathan Collier who has a degree in interior design, and seventeen years working in the business while living in London. "It was mainly commercial work where I designed anything from shopping centres to bits of the interior on the QE2 cruise liner!" he confirmed. At the time he was doing all this, designing the interior of a T5 wasn't featuring on his 'to do' list. "At the time I was working in London, I was into surfing and used to drive down to Poole for the weekends in a van; my first was a T2. I did a welding course to keep it on the road and of course kitted out the interior so I could live in it at weekends," explained Jonathan. And that's how it all started.

He then moved to Ireland and with the help of his girlfriend, set himself up in the VW scene. "It took me five days to cut up my first interior and I realised that was not the right way to start a business, so I went off and signed up for some CAD training," said Jonathan. He eventually managed to 'put' that design into a computer and found a local company who would give him access to their CNC machine so he could cut his interiors more efficiently."I had about half a dozen kits made that way and I built a website and rented a small unit on a farm; we were fitting them as well as windows and pop-tops," he elaborated. He then realised the only way to expand was by investing in his own CNC machine, so that's what he did. Then he expanded his market for kits, by selling to the UK. The Irish scene is pretty small, soon he'd worked on almost every VW in the country, so the next logical step was to move his operation to the UK.

The South Coast was the

SAWGEAR

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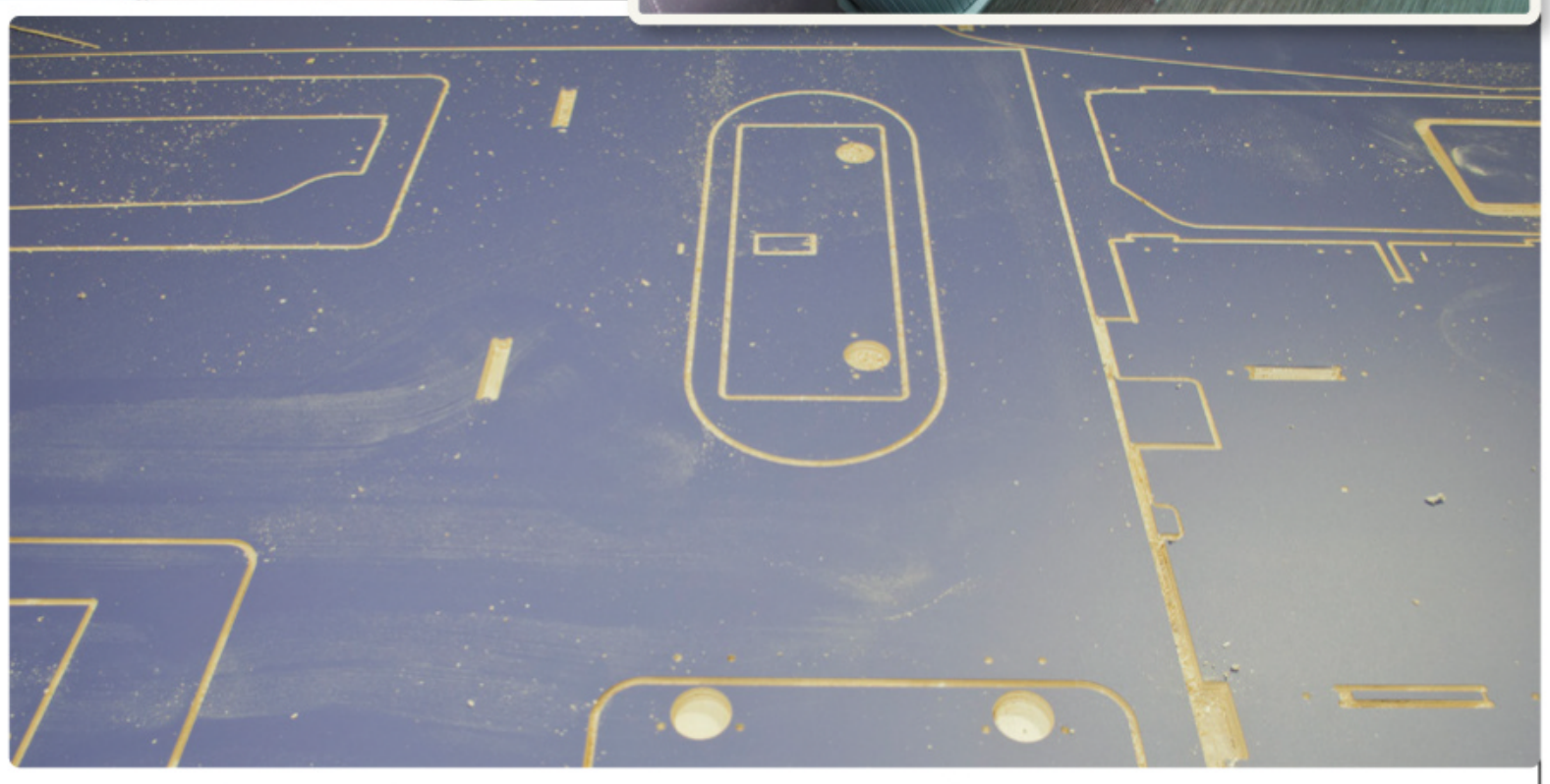
evo Design

Almost everything is done in-house now; we have three CNC machines that are running five days a week

obvious choice and in 2010 Evo Design was launched in the UK. In theory the more 'generic' company name means he's not restricted to just VW interiors, in the future if he wants to expand to train, boat or even airplane interiors, the option is open.

He moved his CNC machine across from Ireland on the back of a trailer and took his favourite staff member with him too. To start with, for several months, he was sleeping in his camper, inside his unit, before he found a house to live in. His girlfriend wisely stayed in Ireland until he had the keys to a house!

The business expanded and he took on more staff and was still designing, manufacturing and fitting units in VW campers. But he was selling more and more flat pack kits and decided that it really wasn't cost effective for him to still be fitting them too - so he closed that part of the company and just concentrated on manufacturing the kits. Today Jonathan is still involved with designing new kits, as well as running the business and he's got a staff of a dozen to help him out in the office and production unit, which also includes a massive on-site show room. If you can't see the layout you want for your VW in the showroom, then it doesn't exist. "Almost everything is done in-house now; we have three CNC machines that are running five days a week," he's proud to point out. He's also designed items



such as the door hinges, although production of them is currently outsourced. Evo Designs can also supply electrical appliances to fill up the holes in their flat-pack kits, but Jonathan does say that most people tend to supply and fit their own fridges etc. “About 60% of our sales are to the trade, most of whom are in the UK, although we have sent kits as far as South Africa and even New Zealand,” he pointed out. “Everything is made to order, but they are not really bespoke kits,” he elaborated. “We can make a few changes to them to meet customer requests, but nothing too drastic.” So basically, you pick a basic design off the shelf - and there are hundreds to choose from - and then start ticking the option lists - just like when you spec up a new car. There are assembly videos available, along with the instructions, which are provided with each kit. They also offer a customer support phoneline for those people who don’t know one end of a screwdriver from the other. The majority of kits sold are of the T5/T6 flavour, although they do stock interior kits going back to the T2.

On average it takes about two weeks from a kit being ordered, to it being ready for delivery. Evo Designs also stock wood (about 12,000 sheets of quality plywood in stock most of the time) so you can order a few sheets and design and cut your own interior, if you feel the urge to go totally DIY. “Over the past couple of years we probably send out around a dozen kits a day, during our busy months,” said Jonathan. “When the sun comes out, there is definitely a burst of interest and sales, as people start to think about weekends away in their vans,” said Jonathan.

So global warming gets a big thumbs up from Evo Design!

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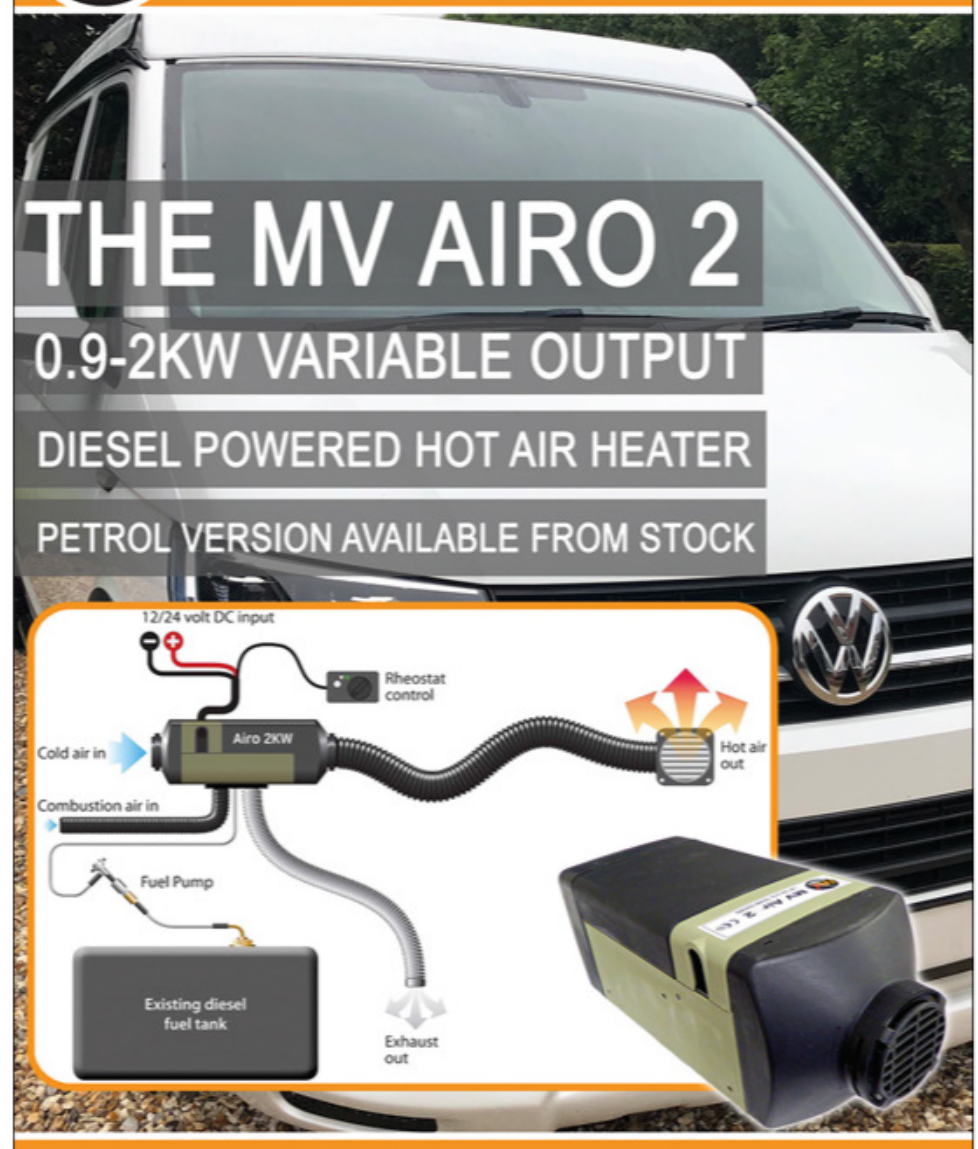

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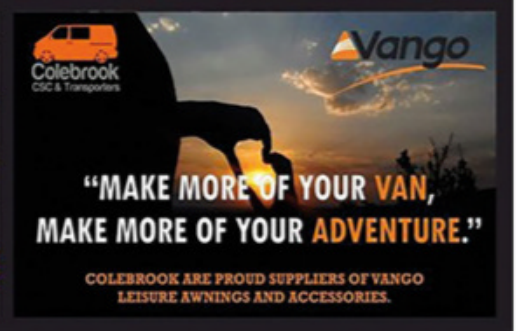
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Quido on the Road

If you have a dream to go on the ultimate road trip around Europe, there's no better place to start than by buying a four-wheel drive former ambulance

Steve "autoholic" Edwards

For John Adamcik and his wife Veronika their adventure began when they decided to leave their home country of the Czech Republic to travel to the UK to learn English. They began by attending a language school in Oxford, before extending their trip to tour the length and breadth of the country. During an expedition to the Lake District in their Skoda Fabia, John vowed that one day he and Veronika would own another camper.

At home, safely stored in a friend's garage John has a T3 tucked away. Although it's no ordinary example, as before buying it, he'd been searching for a specific model for ten years. The van in question is a Whitestar Hanover Edition, which was one of the last vans to come off the Hanover production line. The couple had used the van for touring around, but the more they saw, the more they realised that there was so much to see and visit. It was soon obvious that they'd need a van that wasn't so precious to John and if it had four-wheel drive, that would be a huge bonus.

During their British tour a friend of John's in the Czech Republic, Radek, contacted him to say that the high top T4 he'd been using for his building business was about to become available, if he wanted it. The 1999, long wheelbase van wasn't just the regular builder's hack though. It had previously been an ambulance in the country, but what made it attractive was that it was a petrol powered Syncro. As it turns out the reason it was being sold was that the clutch had given up and the cambelt was due to be changed, it had also suffered ten long years of abuse transporting

It has previously been an ambulance, but what made it attractive was that it was a petrol powered Syncro

Bus Details

What did the van start as? T4 Ambulance

Colour? VW White

SWB/LWB? LWB

BHP? 85

Wheel type and size? Mercedes Benz Steels 15"

Tyres? 215/75/15

Lowered? Raised

Why is it special to you? Quido is special as it's now part of the family and we hope it will make our dreams come true.

Quido has presence

Practical and stylish

Veronika wanted to christen the van Quido after its Name Day

cement and building supplies around. John decided that the van would be perfect for what he had in mind and so organised for it to have the mechanical work taken care of before he collected it. Veronika wanted to christen the van Quido after its Name Day. The Czech calendar has a name attached to each day, except national holidays, so it was an obvious choice. John had to do a load of welding to replace a lot of rotten metal but wasn't too bothered if the exterior didn't look pristine as he had no doubt that it would collect more dings, dents and scratches. He did however, want the signage that had been used to promote the building business removed.

Whilst in the UK, he and Veronika had been fortunate to secure employment in a country house estate, where he had been given permission to work on the van, but only after hours and outside in a car park, as there wasn't any undercover space available. That meant that any work on the van was weather dependant and as John had not completed anything remotely like this before, he spent hours and hours on Pinterest researching and a lot of time watching videos on YouTube learning. He removed all the seats and the framework that remained from the van's ambulance days to give it a thorough clean, before starting construction on the bed and storage. He'd thought long and hard about the layout before picking up any tools, all of which he had to buy or borrow. He started by sketching out a few ideas, before he and Veronika agreed on which would suit them best. This was especially important as the plan is for the van to be their home for months at a time. After applying copious amounts of both thermal and acoustic insulation, the van was ply lined, including a new floor. It was finished off with some tongue and groove cladding that had been burnt to bring out more of the wood grain, sanded, painted with white emulsion and sanded again before being installed. Veronika is a fan of the rustic look and so that was the style for the interior. The cool oak countertop is an offcut that has been reclaimed, it has had a sink set into it. The piece that was removed to make space for the basin, has been kept and used as a cover to provide a little extra workspace.

Al, who rents a workshop on the estate, has been a huge help with advice and the loan of the odd tool here and there, without his invaluable assistance the project would have taken a whole lot longer. The estate was very kind too, by donating some wine cases that John has repurposed into drawers, they

Re-purposed interior materials

Clever bed extension

He started by sketching out a few ideas, before he and Veronika agreed on which would suit them best

also generously contributed some champagne boxes, that are now hinged doors that cover some of the storage areas.

The plan was always to have a fixed bed and John added a clever fold down section that gives a little extra length, the bottom of the bed also lifts up to give access to the area underneath, where the fridge and portable toilet are stored. The extra buddy seat also houses a bin and as it's a stand-alone item, it can be used outside the van too. The couple prefer to cook outside as much as possible, John installed a pair of 100-watt solar panels on the roof, so that power is available off-grid and a 375-volt inverter makes sure that both 240 and 12-volt options are on hand should the need arise. Some very handy shelving was added above the kitchen area, some enamel mugs that have been personalised with a map, a cartoon of John and one with the legend of "Quido na cestach" which translated means Quido on the road, hang below it. As the van is petrol powered a Webasto night heater that uses that fuel has been installed, it was bought from a Russian company, as it was half the price of the same item in the UK. It wasn't the first one John bought though. He'd acquired a cheap Chinese heater that didn't live up to expectations, then he found a Eberspacher B2L that had been removed from a Westfalia vehicle, but sadly whoever took it off wasn't that careful with their cutters and so the challenge to reinstall proved too much. The van was converted to also run on LPG many years ago and came complete with a 120-litre tank, it has a theoretical range of over 1000 miles between fill ups, once both fuels have been exhausted.

The clever rear door storage is another international purchase. A Czech company called Domov

Custom made rear storage

The plan was always to have a fixed bed and John added a clever fold down section that gives it a little extra length

na Kolceh, which means house on wheels, custom made them to the couple's specification, after a pair of paper templates had been sent over. John made his own mounts for the pair of spare wheels that have been mounted to the doors and has also included a pair of jerry cans to carry extra fuel, they have the vans

Instagram address on them, @t4_syncro_madness. In addition to those he has added some grip mats, in case the going gets sticky, a wind out Fiamma awning and there are fittings to carry a kayak too.

The couple started a mammoth adventure in October of 2019. This began in France, then on to Switzerland, Germany and Austria to give the van a soft test to make sure everything works before they head to Central Asia for around a year. They plan to visit to Albania, Bosnia, Turkey, Albania and as many "Stans" as they can, accompanied by their dog Lola. It's possible they might head to Mongolia, but as the highways there leave a lot to be desired, they might leave that out, as they really want to keep Quido on the road.

John

And I'd like to thank:

I'd like to thank my wife Veronika for her support and her work on the van

Radek for selling it to me and for sourcing parts at great prices

Miss Emma for permission to work on the estate

Al for all his help and the loan of tools

And the CZ and UK T4 Facebook pages for the advice.

Follow is at @t4-syncro_madness on Instagram.

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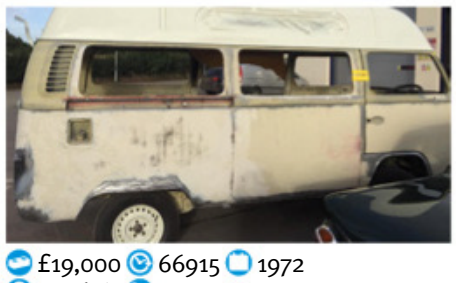
VW T2 CAMPERVAN



£19,000 66915 1972
Cumbria 07974310251
E: Taniatwilliams@yahoo.co.uk
BB King was rescued from a scrap yard two years ago. He has been stripped back to basics and all bodywork, welding, new panels completed. Roof has been resprayed but he is now ready to be completed internally, sprayed and final adjustments. Currently at Cumbria Classic Cars where all works have been carried out. Available to view anytime.

VW CAMPERVAN T2 BAY WINDOW

£15,000 99490 1972
07767852841 Ladybank
E: calum.wilson@evolutionbsl.com
The van is in close to original condition with original conversion furniture and Dormobile raising roof. Original engine so far as we are aware. We have owned the van since 2002. It is tax exempt with a current MOT to July 2020. It has some welding and requires some TLC but is ready to go.

VOLKSWAGEN KOMBI SYNCRO CAMPER

£35,000 1990 152000
Bli Bli 0498382602
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£14,500 136000 1989
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E: fraser_irvine2002@yahoo.co.uk
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VW CAMPER 2014

£20,000 63500 2014
07971 671235 Malvern
E: Simon.egerton@btinternet.com
Full conversation by CJC Worcester with Rock Roll bed pop top roof conversation to sleep 2 cooker sink full electrics night heater TV full awning with sides MOT 25/03/19 FSH 2 Owners

VW T2 WESTFALIA

£22,000 91000 1971
07854087600 St Albans
E: steve.macmurray@sky.com
'Ruby', VW T2 Camper Van, 4 berth pop top, left hand drive, US Import. VGC. Refurb interior 2014, excellent Kenwood Stereo.

T2 WESTFALIA CROSSOVER BAY

£20,000 85000 1972
07515912272 Willenhall
E: stewartbrittain1979@gmail.com
LHD, tax exempt, Californian import, never welded, no rust, underbody corrosion protected, bodywork in great condition. Rebuilt 2.0l aircooled engine.Geneberg gearshift system. Adjustable front suspension beam. Reconditioned brake system. Steering box recently reconed. Stainless exhaust system. Dry stored, Owned for 10 years, must go to a good home

VW T5.1 SWB HIGH LINE 140

£24,000 76000 2014
07746284650 Lincoln
E: simonrawlinson1@gmail.com
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T5.1 T28 2010 5SEAT 5 BERTH

£21,000 135 2010
07999823293 Swansea
E: rogerbeynon@hotmail.com
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Abidjan Brownies

by **Steve "autoholic" Edwards**

What better way to kick of a New Year and a new decade than with some delicious Brownies!

Yes, we're starting this new decade as we mean to go on, with some super healthy, awesomely delicious, easy to make brownies. And when we say healthy we mean they've got fruit in them, so they can't be all bad, right? We've used peanut butter too, so if you're allergic then find an alternative, and while we're talking peanut butter the one we've used is 100% nuts, no sugar, sweeteners, preservatives and more importantly, no Palm Oil! The bananas we've used are about a week old and the riper they are the easier they will mash, ones that are fresh and green in colour aren't as suitable as they are far too hard to work with. Once the cake batter has been poured into the greased tin, evenly distribute the peanut butter on the top. Use a knife to drag it through the mixture rather than stirring. Take care not to push the knife too far into the mix as you don't want to score the tin. We've used Cacao powder rather than regular cocoa, as it has been derived from the raw cocoa bean, so not roasted, it's actually a super food, high in antioxidants and proven to be good for you, who says we don't look after you on this page? And for anyone who actually reads this far, Abidjan is the home of ATC Comafrique, VW's exclusive distributor in the Republic of Ivory Coast, the world's largest producer of cocoa, tenuous I know, sorry.

Ingredients

2 Ripe bananas
150g Caster sugar
110g Butter
1tsp Vanilla essence
100g Plain flour
½ tspn Salt
50g Cacao powder
125g Smooth peanut butter

Method:

1. Pre-heat oven to 180C, 350F or Gas Mark 4.
2. In a mixing bowl mash the bananas with a fork until smooth.
3. Heat the butter in a small saucepan over a low to medium heat, stirring constantly until melted. If you cube the butter first it will melt faster than one large piece.
4. Once liquid pour the butter into the mashed bananas, but hold a little butter back to grease your cake tin with. Add the sugar and vanilla essence.
5. Mix until fully combined then add the flour, salt and cocoa powder, but hold back a little to coat the baking tin with. Mix until blended.
6. Using a silicone, or similar, kitchen brush, grease an eight-inch baking tin with the remainder of the melted butter. Sprinkle in the held back cocoa powder and shake around the tin until it is fully covered.

7. Pour in the cake mixture and equally distribute the peanut butter on top and gently drag a knife across the surface until the peanut butter and the cake batter mix.
8. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes.
9. Tip out onto a cooling rack, and once cool cut into equal portions.

Top Tips

Bananas that are about a week old are good, as they are easier to mash than fresher ones, so don't choose the green ones for this. As always remember to clean as you go, nobody likes a messy kitchen, not even in 2020!

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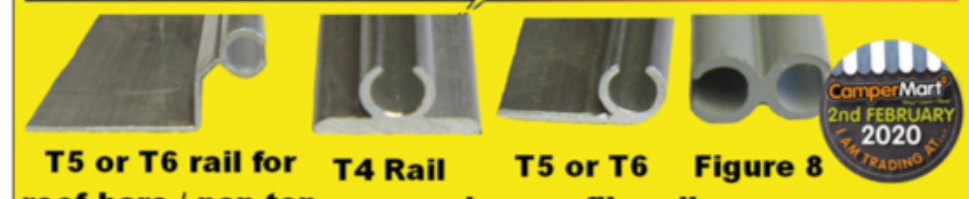

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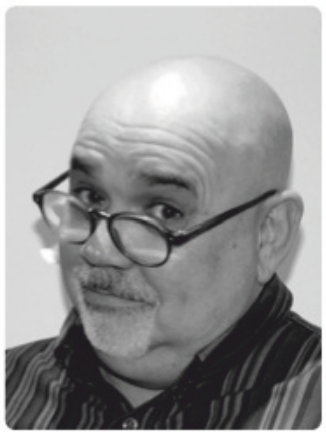

Old Al's Almanac

Words: **Alan Hayward**

As 2020 dawns I'd like to offer you Old Al's Almanac, my predictions for the coming year

JANUARY
In the face of recent "Motor Caravan" classification changes at the DVLA regarding high-top roofs, HiLo roofs are obliged to change their trading name to HiHi roofs.

FEBRUARY
Camper Mart is a great success right up until David Eccles, a columnist here and editor of Camper and Commercial, has to be dragged from the stage, when his half hour talk on old buses enters its third hour...

MARCH
The DVLA announce an alternative to the high-top roof that is currently a requirement for reclassification as a Motor Caravan. An upturned boat, so long as it's permanently fixed, is also now acceptable.

APRIL
Slide Pods announce a new product, a slide out toilet. It's only available in green and it's called, wait for it, the Pee Pod.

MAY
The DVLA announce that if an upturned boat is used in conversion, life jackets must be readily accessible in the vehicle for the number of passengers allowed to be carried, just in case.

JUNE
In time for Camper Jam next month Rugs for Bugs announce a new line 'Rugs for Blokes'. They are in effect hairpieces made from cab mat carpet. There are apparently plans for a coffee sack version and even one in a GTI checked fabric.

JULY
The DVLA decide to clarify exactly what a high-top is. It turns out that it's much higher than originally assumed. Upturned boats are no longer acceptable, although weirdly the life jacket requirements stay in place.

AUGUST
Camper Calling is a sell-out. Dave Richards AKA The Barefoot Chef

Susie Mycock's bus suitable for reclassification post March

Ripe for conversion post November

and assistant editor at Camper and Commercial is ejected from the site on Friday for wearing nothing but a bright pink beard and in a break with tradition, some shoes...

SEPTEMBER
In a move of increasing exasperation, HiHi (formerly HiLo) once more change their name, this time to Hi and seriously bloody Hi roofs.

OCTOBER
Transporter HQ's sister company, So Low, introduce a suspension range to go alongside their "Because I Got

Santa follows the rules

High" lift kits and So Low lowering kits, operating at stock height, it's called the "So So".

NOVEMBER
The DVLA announce that in future only former Double Decker buses will be allowed to reclassify and passengers must wear their lifejackets at all times.

DECEMBER
The DVLA take the month off, but only after announcing that Santa, Rudolf and the rest of the gang will need to wear lifejackets if they want to continue being the certified present delivery providers at Christmas.

Happy New Year!

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What's In A Name?

Words: **David Eccles**

Is it a Campervan? An MPV? A Windowed Van? Does it matter?

The answer is yes, from now on yes it does! As of October 2019, the regulations regarding classification for "Motor Caravan" have significantly changed and could have a major impact on DIY conversions and some conversion companies. Trying to navigate the plethora of information, misinformation, conflicting opinions and near hysteria that exploded on the internet recently has been a minefield, but below is my simple take on what it all means.

Last October DVLA introduced a whole set of new stringent guidelines for a vehicle to be classed as a "Motor Caravan" on the V5 document. In addition to previous requirements for seating, bed, cooker and water storage etc the new regulations stipulate that the vehicle must also now have two side windows in one side, distinctive graphics on the body, a fixed awning rail and ... wait for it ... a fixed high roof! And there's the rub; vans being converted from Panel Vans or Kombis and fitted with elevating roofs can no longer be registered as Motor Caravans. Just think how many T5s featured in this magazine started life as a commercial, and whilst it won't affect any of those, as changes are not retrospective, it may well impact on what happens in future!

Why is this being done? The cynical or conspiracy theorist will say it's all about a sneaky way to raise tax revenue by changing classifications; the official reason given is it's so emergency vehicles can easily ID if a vehicle is a camper (and may have gas bottles etc) in event of an accident. You can decide for yourself on that one.

Does it matter? Will it affect you? Quite possibly! A Motor Caravan or MPV classed vehicle is subject to same speed limits as a passenger car, whereas a Panel Van or Kombi is restricted to 50 mph on ordinary roads and 60 mph on dual carriageways. Previously it was quite straightforward to get such a vehicle re-classified after conversion, that is no longer the case ...and don't forget the new generation of digital APNR speed cameras know what class your vehicle is!

There are also insurance implications regarding cover for internal fittings etc as some companies will only insure as a motor caravan if the V5 lists it as such. Eurotunnel and Ferries and some toll roads have different tariffs for commercials and motor caravans, and I am even hearing that some campsites will only book in people with vehicles registered as Motor Caravans!

The VW Transporter uses two chassis bases, M1 for passenger carrying vehicles and N1 for Panel Vans and Kombis and this will be something to watch out for now if you are contemplating buying an ex-commercial to convert. Conversion companies which use an N1 chassis may also find problems, as they can no longer register it as Motor Caravan. Bigger players use the M1 base, and it's down to them to get IVA inspection and DVLA classification as Motor Caravan, so things like VW's own California Ocean are unaffected. Or are they? Apparently some new T6 Oceans are now being classed as MPVs on the V5, but I have not yet worked out what that means in practice, apart from not worrying about lower speed limits! And coming back to the conspiracy theorists, it now costs a lot more road tax if buying a vehicle classed as a Motor Caravan!

Confused? By the time you read this in January things may have changed or become clearer! Or not! As I said, this is my personal understanding of the conundrum – and we'd like to hear about your experiences or views!

David Eccles is editor of **VW Camper & Commercial**, which covers the whole VW bus scene. He owned the same 1966 Devon camper for 34 years, before migrating to a new T5 California. You can contact David on *editor@volkswagencamper.co.uk*.

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